



NEWS

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**CONTACT: BILL HEARD/JIM SMART
MTA NEWS BUREAU
(213) 244-7047, 244-6347
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MTA METRO RAIL TEAM WORKS WITH NICET TO DEVELOP CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FOR QUALITY INSPECTORS

A new program to certify construction inspectors in rail and subway construction quality control is under development by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) and the National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies (NICET).

Ten MTA Metro Rail inspectors were honored recently as the first in the nation to receive a certificate in Rail/Subway Construction Quality Control. The joint MTA/NICET program includes an examination to test the knowledge and experience of rail construction inspectors. A nationwide NICET certification program for inspectors is being projected for 1996.

The NICET exam includes a core of nine "work elements" each inspector must pass. These include basic physical science, construction terms and definitions, OSHA and other safety requirements, and principles of quality control. A candidate's exam also may include a number of electives chosen on the basis of the individual's construction technical specialties.

"Passing the NICET exam is an excellent indication of an inspector's experience and knowledge," said John J. Adams, MTA Acting Executive Officer, Construction. "NICET certification will greatly benefit rail projects nationwide."

"This certification program will allow NICET to better serve employers and specify agencies who want qualified construction personnel to ensure quality construction," said Dr. John Antrim, NICET General Manager. "This new program will join several others, such as NICET's highway construction certification program, which is currently used by a number of state highway departments."

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A five-member team of MTA Metro Rail quality managers developed an extensive curriculum to train quality control inspectors in all aspects of their work. Instrumental in creating the program were Bud Boyd, Training Manager; Malcolm Ingram, former Director of Quality; Ron Trepp, Manager, Quality Assurance; Mark Latch, Manager, Quality Control; and George Morschauser, Parsons-Dillingham construction manager.

The NICET exam is one element of a five-part training program instituted in 1994 for MTA quality inspectors. Two elements taught by the American Concrete Institute provide 22 to 30 hours of training and examinations to qualify inspectors in the critical skills of concrete testing and inspection.

Another six-hour written and practical exam offered by the American Welding Society certifies MTA employees as welding inspectors. A fourth element is a 30-hour public works construction inspectors course taught by California State University at Los Angeles. This course also prepares inspectors to take the NICET exam.

"The entire curriculum is designed to continuously increase the knowledge and effectiveness of MTA inspectors who must ensure the quality of the highly technical work of rail and tunnel construction," said Boyd, the team's facilitator.

The 10 MTA inspectors who received the first joint MTA/NICET certificates during a ceremony in mid-March were Alan Hodge, Robert Veatch, Mike Torres, Gary Rudy, Ralph Ratliff, Ken Morrow, Gary Manker, Emanuel Douglas and Kerry Bodtke, all of Parsons-Dillingham, the MTA's construction management firm, and Chuck Chang of Managers of Transit Construction, an MTA consulting firm.

"Creating a comprehensive training program in such a complex field as subway construction is quite an accomplishment in itself," said Franklin E. White, MTA's chief executive officer. "To develop a technical certification program that will be used throughout the construction industry is especially significant and a credit to both the MTA and NICET."

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