

Automotive Service Station Mechanic and Front End and Brake Technician Subtrade Designation Review

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PREPARED FOR:

The Nova Scotia Automotive Human Resources Sector Council

Survey Results Report

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Nova Scotia Automotive Human Resource Sector Council (ASC) is the lead agency for human resources development in the automotive service and repair industry in Nova Scotia. The Council's mission and mandate are as follows:

Mission Statement

Committed to the development of a skilled, professional workforce for Nova Scotia's automotive service and repair industry.

Mandate

We are committed to working with Industry, industry associations and other interested partners to identify changing human resource labour issues, propose recommendations and develop solutions that will help build a stronger automotive service and repair labour market.

In 2008, the ASC was contracted by the Apprenticeship Board to research industry's interest and need to make changes to the Automotive Services trade and its sub-trades. A previous report has been completed that provides the detailed results of the research that was carried out for the review of the Transmission Technician sub-trade.

The Apprenticeship Committee is continuing its review of the AST Red Seal trade and the value and relevance of its three sub trades: i) Service Station Mechanic, ii) Transmission Technician and iii) Front End and Brake Technician.

This current project and report involved establishment of an Industry Review Committee to oversee the work and developing a survey directed to businesses involved in and with an interest in automotive service with a focus on Service Station Mechanic (SSM) and Front End and Brakes Technician (FEB) sub-trades. The survey was conducted as an online survey, with the option to use a paper based version for those who did not have access to the internet.

D.W. Pilkey Consulting was contracted to assist with development of the survey, put it on the web and write a report summarizing the findings.

The ASC carried out the following for this review:

- Established AST Survey Committee
- Held two committee meetings
- Designed and administered an employer survey
- Engaged a consultant to summarize and report on the results of the review work.

The Automotive Sector Council established an AST Survey Committee to help promote and assist in gathering responses from across the region.

Surveys were sent to approximately 650 companies who were potentially involved in service and repair work.

The survey report highlighted the existing and future shortage of Automotive Service Technicians to hire. Respondents expressed their challenge in finding fully qualified AST technicians to hire as well as reported as having apprentices that didn't pursue the full scope of the trade to Red Seal endorsed AST. Advisory Committee discussion raised concerns about the direct correlation between the SSM exam challenges and the institution of the new requirement for MVI inspectors to possess SSM certification.

For respondents that felt sub-trade certification should be discontinued, they expressed concerns about maintaining a level of professionalism within the industry, with public safety being cited several times as vehicle technology becomes more sophisticated. It was expressed that the image of the trade needed to be raised to attract new people into the industry as well as retain existing technicians.

Almost 90% of respondents state that it was important or very important to maintain the AST designation for their business, with only 43% stating the importance of maintaining the Front end and Brakes and 56% in maintaining the Service Station Mechanic designation. Less importance is placed on the sub-trade designations; however 67% of respondents overall felt that the sub-trades should not be eliminated.

Attracting new people to the industry was also cited as a concern from respondents supporting sub-trades as it was looked at as a stepping stone method of training to the final Red Seal endorsed AST certification. It was expressed that it may be more attractive to new entrants to attain a qualification after two years versus the full four year program. The financial strain on the individual going through the apprenticeship program as an apprentice versus the pay scale associated with a qualified SSM was mentioned as a factor to keep Sub-Trade certification.

For respondents that felt sub-trade certification should be continued it was felt that discontinuing sub-trade certification would have a negative impact on smaller operations. These smaller business' cited a lack of capacity in hiring enough AST Red Seal endorsed technicians as well as loss of mentoring opportunities for new apprentices to attain Red Seal certification. The Sub-Trade designations were seen as allowing SME's the flexibility of enrolling additional apprentices' to abide by the 1:1 ratio for Apprenticeship.

Generally there was support for continuation of sub-trade certification with an emphasis on regulation and better support through Apprenticeship training. This highlighted the need for updated curriculum and technical training to keep up with the changing technology within the industry. The Nova Scotia Community College entrance requirements were discussed in committee meetings as the correlation of retention rates and the provincial policy of first come first serve basis. It was noted that updated curriculum and training for new people in the industry was needed as well as ongoing education for existing industry people. Nova Scotia consists of a high percentage of small to medium (SME) sized business' a recommendation would be to include necessary planning that goes into operating a business , which includes a business plan, succession planning as well as Human Resource planning.

This report presents findings from the survey and will be incorporated with the other work carried out for the transmission sub-trade.

2. FINDINGS FROM SURVEY RESEARCH

2.1. Methodology

The Sector Council used its industry database to send the survey by fax to all employers involved in automobile service work approximately 600 businesses. This was supported with follow-up faxes and telephone contacts. It was directed towards the owners and/or managers in the firms. The survey was offered as an online one, using Survey Monkey, with a hard copy version for those who did not have internet access. Anyone completing the hard copy version faxed it to the Sector Council office where staff entered it into Survey Monkey. Interim survey summaries were produced at several intervals and these were used to direct extra efforts to get representation from around the province. The survey was initiated on November 16, 2009 and concluded on January 8, 2010. An entry to a draw for a universal gift certificate of \$100 was offered as an incentive to participate. The winner of this draw was the Lower Sackville Coast Tire and Auto Service Ltd.

For the rest of this section of the report, the text is based on the table following the paragraph.

2.2. Characteristics of Survey Respondents

A total of 83 people responded to the survey. Almost half of these were owners of the business, while another 41% were operators or managers of the business. The balance of the respondents held a variety of positions in the company as shown in the table below.

Role of respondent		
Role	Response Count	Response Frequency
Owner	38	47%
Operator/Manager	33	41%
Human Resources Manager	2	3%
Service Manager	4	5%
Municipal fleet	1	1%
Insurance Professional	1	1%
Technician	1	1%
Fixed Operations Manager	1	1%
No response	1	
Total Respondents	82	

Eighteen of the 18 counties in Nova Scotia were represented in the survey; however the last business to respond was from Inverness via phone and was not received in time to appear in this report. On the whole, the share of respondents by county was representative of the population of the counties. King's County had the highest relative share of responses as shown in the table below.

County in Nova Scotia of business location			
County	Response Count	Response Frequency	Share of Population¹
Annapolis	1	1%	2%
Antigonish	1	1%	2%
Cape Breton	6	7%	11%
Colchester	4	5%	6%
Cumberland	6	7%	3%
Digby	1	1%	2%
Guysborough	1	1%	1%
Halifax - metro	30	37%	42%
Halifax non-metro	4	5%	
Hants	2	2%	4%
Inverness	0	0%	2%
Kings	11	13%	7%
Lunenburg	3	4%	5%
Pictou	3	4%	5%
Queens	1	1%	1%
Richmond	1	1%	1%
Shelburne	2	2%	2%
Victoria	1	1%	1%
Yarmouth	4	5%	3%
Total Respondents	82		

¹ Source: Nova Scotia Community Counts web page - data from Statistics Canada, Demographic Estimates, 2008

One third of respondents were independent service and repair shops. Automobile dealerships and service stations each represented another one fifth of respondents.

Description of Business		
Description	Response Count	Response Frequency
Independent general service & repair	27	33%
Automobile dealership – new and used cars	17	21%
Service station or specialized service/repair shop	15	19%
Tire Sales & Service and Automotive Repair	10	12%
Retail store (e.g., Canadian Tire, Wal-Mart, etc.)	3	4%
Independent brakes and/or front end specialist shop	3	4%
Used car sales and service department	2	2%
Jobber- supplier to the trade	2	2%
Municipal fleet	1	1%
Insurance	1	1%
Collision repair	0	0%
Total Respondents	81	

Almost two thirds of the businesses have been in operation for more than 20 years while only 7% had been in operation for less than 5 years.

Years of Operation		
Years	Response Count	Response Frequency
Less than 5	6	7%
5 to 20 years	23	28%
More than 20 years	52	64%
Total Respondents	81	

2.3. Business Employee Profile

Seventy-five of the 82 respondents reported having one or more employees with over 90% being full-time. They had a total of 1,181 full-time employees and another 122 part-time employees. Almost 70% of the businesses reported less than 10 employees with 2 reporting more than 100 employees.

5. Over the past 12 months, how many individuals, including yourself, did this shop or business location employ altogether?			
Number of Employees	Full-time	Part-time Throughout year	Part-time seasonal/occasional
1 to 4	23	29	19
5 to 10	29	3	5
11 to 25	12	1	
26 to 50	6		
51 to 100	3		
Over 100	2		
Businesses responding	75	33	24
Total employees	1,181	89	33

A total of 75 companies reported they had one or more employees with a trade designation. Using the number of full-time employees as the base, over 20% of the employees had the red-seal designation of Automotive Service Mechanic. Five percent had the Service Station Mechanic designation and 3% had the Front and Brakes Technician designation.

6. Over the past 12 months, how many individuals, including yourself, did this shop or business location employ who had the following trades' qualification or training and certification?			
Number of Employees	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
1 to 4	56	30	13
5 to 10	6	2	
11 to 25	5		1
Businesses responding	67	32	14
Total employees	247	54	35

Seventy-two businesses reported having a total of 152 existing vacancies requiring a trade designation to meet current business requirements. Service Station Mechanic had a proportionally higher vacancy rate (32% of vacancies) compared to the current work force (16% of current employees with a Service Station Mechanic

designation). Fifty-seven percent of vacancies were for a person with red-seal (74% of current employees with a trade designation) and 11% for Front end and Brakes.

7. How many individuals with the following trades' qualification or training and certification do you think you need for existing vacancies to meet current business requirements?			
Number of Employees	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
1 to 4	42	31	12
5 to 10	3	1	
11 to 25			
Businesses responding	45	32	12
Total employees	87	48	17

2.4. Business Implications of Certification

Almost 90% of respondents stated that it was important or very important to maintain the AST designation for their business. This contrasts with 49% saying it was important for the Front and Brakes designation and 56% for Service Station Mechanic. With 1 meaning not at all important and 5 meaning very important, the mean scores for the importance of continuing the trade designations was 4.5 for Automotive Service Technician, 3.5 for Service Station Mechanic and 3.4 for Front End and Brakes Technician.

8. How important is it to your shop or business location to continue to have employees with the following qualifications?			
Importance	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
Not at all important	2	10	10
Not important	3	7	6
Somewhat important	3	13	19
Important	18	14	15
Very important	49	25	18
Total Responding	75	69	68
Mean score	4.5	3.5	3.4

Seventy-two businesses reported they expected that, with normal turnover and retirements, they would need a total of 205 people with a trade designation over the next three years. Fifty-eight percent of these would be at the red seal level, 34% would be Service Station Mechanics and 8% Front and Brake Technicians.

9. To maintain and grow your businesses, and given normal turnover and retirement of older workers, how many individuals with the following trades qualification or training and certification do you think you will need to hire over the next three (3) years?			
Number of Employees	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
1 to 4	60	39	16
5 to 10	4	2	1
11 to 25			
Businesses responding	64	41	17
Total employees	119	69	17

Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated that it would be difficult to recruit people with the AST designation. Fifty-eight percent stated that it would be difficult to recruit people with the Front and Brakes designation and 61% expected difficulty for Service Station Mechanics. With 1 meaning not at all difficult and 5 meaning very difficult, the mean scores for the difficulty of recruiting for each of the trade designations was 4.5 for Automotive Service Technician, 3.5 for Service Station Mechanic and 3.4 for Front End and Brakes Technician.

10. How difficult do you expect it will be to recruit the workers you might hire over the next three (3) years with the following qualifications?			
Difficulty	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
Not at all difficult	1	6	6
Not difficult	2	4	4
Somewhat difficult	12	14	15
Difficult	28	24	21
Very Difficult	29	14	13
Total Responding	72	62	59
Mean Score	4.1	3.6	3.5

Just over 90% of respondents stated that it was important or very important to continue to train and certify for the AST designation for their business. The importance was much less for the Front and Brakes designation at 54% and 63% for Service Station Mechanic. With 1 meaning not at all important and 5 meaning very important, the mean scores for the importance of continuing to train and certify for the trade designations was 4.6 for Automotive Service Technician, 3.6 for Service Station Mechanic and 3.4 for Front End and Brakes Technician.

11. How important is it to your business operations to continue to train and certify workers as:			
Importance	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
Not at all important		13	14
Not important	3	4	3
Somewhat important	3	7	13
Important	14	14	10
Very important	49	27	25
Total Responding	69	65	65
Mean Score	4.6	3.6	3.4

Over 80% of the 72 businesses responding to this question felt they met the requirements to train an apprentice at each of the three levels. The surprise in the answers were that there was a greater degree of uncertainty for the lower levels of the apprenticeship training with about 10% being uncertain about the Service Station Mechanic and Front End and brakes compared to 4% uncertainty for the Red Seal. The latter qualifies for the others.

12. Does your facility meet the requirements to train an apprentice at each of the following levels?			
Importance	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
Yes	60	52	55
No	5	4	4
Not Sure	3	7	6
Total Responding	68	63	65

Sixty-eight businesses indicated that they would be willing to employ and mentor an additional 108 apprentices - 63 for the full AST program, 30 for Service Station Mechanic and 15 for Front End and Brakes Technician.

13. Please indicate how many new apprentices in the following trades, if any, you would be willing to employ and mentor over the next 12 months (in addition to any you currently have)?			
Number of Employees	Automotive Service Technician	Service Station Mechanic	Front End and Brakes
1 to 4	47	26	15
5 to 10			
11 to 25			
Businesses responding	47	26	15
Total employees	63	30	15

2.5. Views on Future of Sub-trade Designation

Fifty-seven percent of respondents felt that discontinuing the sub-trade certification would have a negative impact on their business while 43% felt that there would be no impact or even positive results.

14. How would discontinuing future sub-trade certifications impact your business?		
Impact	Response Count	Response Frequency
Very negative	23	33%
Negative	17	24%
No impact	21	30%
Positive	4	6%
Very positive	5	7%
Total Responding	70	

Two thirds of the respondents felt that the sub-trade certification should not be eliminated while one third felt that it should be eliminated.

16. Should the current sub trades certification be eliminated?		
Opinion	Response Count	Response Frequency
Yes	23	33%
No	47	67%
Total Responding	70	

Question 15 asked for opinions on discontinuing the sub-trades. Many comments were provided for both questions and are provided in the following tables.

Question 15 comments are sorted by broad categories as follows:

- Against Discontinuing Sub-trade Designation
- In Favour of Discontinuing Sub-trade Designation
- Other/General Comments - this includes comments that were general in nature or where a clear position was not stated.

Q15. What is your opinion of discontinuing the sub-trades? Please add all comments (Pros and Cons).
Against Discontinuing Sub-trade Designation:
As a former specialist shop(muffler shop) that has now branched out into just about full automotive service, we find that we still have a niche in the local market by doing services that many dealerships find undesirable e.g. exhaust repairs. We also however must provide a full spectrum of services for our customer base, and as such we need people who are qualified to provide varying levels of service. Discontinuing the "sub trades" would limit our options for qualified people to perform these services.
AS FOR MACPHEE PONTIAC IT WOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT. BUT FOR SMALLER SHOPS MUFFLER SHOPS, ETC, THE APPRENTICES WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO ATTAIN RED SEAL CERTIFICATION BECAUSE THEY CANNOT GET THEIR HANDS ON WORK.
Bad decision to do this. Recently we enrolled an apprentice under SSM because our ratio of Full AST journeypersons to apprentices is full. The SSM designated sub-trade allowed us to enroll one more apprentice in a shop where we would not have been able to do so
Bad Idea, it will limit flexibility of shops to operate Cannot think of a PRO
Discontinuing the sub trades will have negative results on any persons desire to enter the auto trades, with less options available for training, potential persons will easily opt for another career.
Don't discontinuing the sub-trades but make some training mandatory
Having gone through the trade start to finish, while raising a family was very hard. To do it the same way today is almost impossible with the cost of living. More push should be given to sub-trades so you could do it in longer steps while making a living. Somehow we must try to keep our skilled trades people in Nova Scotia. It's good for everyone.
Having the Sub-Trade designations allows additional enrolments into apprenticeship when the availability of a Full licensed tech is not there for mentoring. It allows shops to have flexibility with the one to one ratio. What do we do with all those currently certified? If we continue to recognize the designation without requiring upgrading, then the designation should be available. There are a lot of techs that are good with front-end and brakes and have no desire to work electrical, transmission or engine work. Discontinuing the sub-trade leaves this group of potential trades people without opportunities.
I believe that sub trades are the back bone to most small businesses in this trade.
I FEEL WE NEED THEM
I find it hard enough now to get qualified employees. If they do away with the sub trades, it will be even harder to replace the license. techs who are about to retire.

Q15. What is your opinion of discontinuing the sub-trades? Please add all comments (Pros and Cons).

Against Discontinuing Sub-trade Designation:

In my trade, Service Station Mechanic is a must. We do general repairs, tires, etc. One huge problem which will have to be addressed is that the gov't doesn't allow a service station mechanic to hold a MVI license, unless you are grandfathered in which 5 of us are at my location. My techs have been with me for 34,33, 32 30 years and I am in the process of losing most of them in the next 5-7 years-----there by losing all my MVI license holders. We (service stat. mechs.) have to have our MVI licenses, and are just as qualified as any automotive tech to perform this work. Gov't has to be lobbied and change is needed or it is the death of all future S.S.Mech

IT IS VERY HARD TO FILL POSITIONS REQUIRED IN THIS INDUSTRY NOW. BY DISCONTINUING THIS TRADE IT IS GOING TO AFFECT THE WHOLE SERVICE INDUSTRY. WE DESPERATELY NEED QUALIFIED TRAINED PEOPLE FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY NOW-----.

It may discourage young people coming into the trade who may not be sure they want to commit to the full 8000hr course. It may also affect technicians that have difficulty with the technical part of the program. But fully understand enjoy the mechanical side.

It would be disastrous. You can't pay everybody at top wage. You need sub-trades to offset the high loss of licensed techs based on our door rates. Most apprentices become licensed and we can't afford to have all licensed techs.

It's hard to attract younger people into our trade now so I think that the sub trade would allow more people to take advantage of the trade. If someone wanted to work at the local service station they don't need the training that maybe a dealer would require. But if a guy wanted to work at a dealer and was willing to do the training the opportunity is there. All in all it just gives us as owners and young apprentices a choice as to what path to take.

Keep the sub-trades but make training mandatory

Limits flexibility of shops to remain open Limits individuals only interested in obtaining SSM

Our business shows that the largest percentage of our mechanical business is in Brakes, Front End & Suspension work along with Alignments, so ideally our requirement for skill level is fulfilled with SSM or FEB. We gladly take full AST but tend to lose good ones due to the lack of high end work. This then lends to the next problem of having enough fully licensed tech to mentor apprentices. Also, some apprentices in the full AST program tend to stop or slow their continued schooling once they receive the SSM designation. Maybe checking with the large part suppliers, such as NAPA and CARQUEST to identify what is the bulk of their part sales might give some indication to the type of services being needed most by the overall public.

Separate designation might limit the amount of incompletes for the Full AST Program I think you will be doing a disservice to those working in the trade. Getting rid of the designation (rather than specializing it) doesn't give it credibility.

The sub trades give a stepping stone method toward the ultimate goal of red seal

This only adds another barrier to those wanting to be in this trade that is not capable of being certified full AST.

VERY NEGATIVE MOVE TO DISCONTINUE THE SUB-TRADES AS THERE IS STILL A SPOT FOR SERVICE STATION AND FRONT END AND BRAKE TECHNICIANS IN THE AUTOMOTIVE TRADE. NOT EVERY TECHN. WILL MAKE THE RED SEAL ENDORSEMENT AND THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOME JOBS THAT CAN BE PERFORMED BY THE SUB-TRADES TECHN.ALREADY IT IS DIFFICULT TO HIRE A RED SEAL TECHN.AND BY ELIMINATING THE SUB-TRADES IT WILL ONLY BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO FIND TECHNICIANS.

We rely on the SSM designation to operate our business. Taking away the designation limits trades people. Some do not want full licensing, they just want to be able to do what is most common (MVI's, Brakes, Front-end, Suspension & Alignments)

Q15. What is your opinion of discontinuing the sub-trades? Please add all comments (Pros and Cons).

In Favour of Discontinuing Sub-trade Designation:

By allowing not fully trained individuals to operate within the automotive repair sector it creates a false image of the requirements necessary to be an automotive service technician.

I am a jobber/ supplier and was a mechanic back in the 70's and that has helped me in my business. In my opinion there should be discontinuing of future sub-trade certifications -they should be done away with and graduate as full AST red seal mechanics.

I believe there are sub-trade technicians working as fully trained red seal technicians out there now. It should be eliminated to weed out these technicians that are impostors. I have no intention of hiring such a technician unless they are willing to enter into the program and fully qualify for red seal. Today's vehicles are too complex to have sub-trade technicians.

I think a tech needs to be AST red seal so that the public can count on their qualifications. In my opinion that is why the red seal should be the only level of the technician. The other reason being is AST red seal is more universal to the employer and they are more knowledgeable.

I think that if you work in the auto industry as a tech then you should have to have a red seal endorsement. Why only go part of the way?

Sub-trades should be discontinued. If it continues, eventually AST Red Seal will no longer exist. How can a person be certified to work on vehicles that are becoming more sophisticated every year with LESS training????

We have never had any of the sub trades employed at our business. We do not know of any individual in the area with the 2 sub trades mentioned

We need to continue towards being a profession; employed with professionals. In that line of thinking we do not see Doctors and Lawyers with Sub-trades. You are either a doctor or not. Technology dictates that we must have one license period. Having said that, we must have a fair period to grandfather the current holders of these Sub-Trades. The business' that employ these individuals cannot be adversely affected by transition.

Yes the sub trades should be discontinued because the people with these certifications do not limit them self to what they are qualified to do. So that takes jobs away from qualified people.

Other/General Comments:

Decreases flexibility of a shop. Increases opportunities for those not wanting to go IP Should allow for a clear distinction between qualifications and pay rate

Discontinue in trade or not. no half license

For the students that stop at the sub-trades they are selling themselves short of what is needed in today's world of advanced vehicles. The people that are in the sub-trades are doing the other work that red seals are only certified to do and are in most cases not well enough informed of the safety aspect and the understanding of how things work. There is some good to the sub-trades and that is some people are very good at what they do and don't stray from that and should be able to get some kind of certificate for it. but without some kind of enforcement for those that attempt to operate outside of their trained field then the only way is to make everyone be trained to the highest level possible. Unfortunately there is going to be a real shortage of qualified techs within the province because the wages are so low compared to the amount of training, tools, time and effort it take to get started and qualified in this trade. there needs to be even more tax incentives for students as well as all certified techs. THE GOV AT ALL LEVELS DRIVE CARS AND NEED THEM MAINTAINED BUT NEED TO HAVE RESPECT FOR US ALL WITHIN THIS INDUSTRY WHEN IT COMES TO CHANGING LAWS AND REGULATIONS. LET THE PROFESSTIONALS GIVE THIER INPUT BEFORE THE LAWS OR REGULATION ARE CHANGED. IE THE MOTOR VEHICLE INPECTIONS PROCESS.

Other/General Comments:

I think there should only be two sub-trades and that would be AST and SSM. I can not in our area see any shops that would need only a front end and brake person. Let's face it, if someone is qualified to do front end and brakes then chances are they are doing the rest regardless of the rules.

In a declining labour force, we will find it even more difficult to staff. This is especially true for small markets and smaller shops.

Service Writers as of to date have no certification

Takes away your flexibility to continue doing MVI's. There are a lot of technicians moving around, so your ability to do MVI's can be compromised.

The red seal is a great minimum requirement because the others give limitations and set the bar lower for a student's goal

With on going changes with technology in new vehicles the need for highly trained technicians will be in a high demand. Hybrid and electric vehicles that are on the road today are using complicated technology in their brakes and suspension that need highly skilled technicians to repair and service them.

Question 17 asked for comments on the issue of limited training and restricted certification.

Q17. Please add any comments you have on the issue of limited training and restricted certification for service station mechanics and front end and brakes technicians:

Although service station mechanics and front end and brakes technicians are responsible for the safety components of the vehicles on which they perform maintenance, they aren't given the complete recognition of a fully qualified Red Seal technician, even though they are just as competent as said Red Seal technicians.

As I said in the previous question, I believe that these sub-trades are a vital part of the service station industry for small businesses. If these sub trades are eliminated, individually owned and operated service stations will not be able to compete with the bigger corporations. They will eventually have to be bought out by these corporations or they will face losing their businesses all together. As the owner of a small family owned service station this is an issue that greatly concerns me and I feel that before any decisions are made, all sides of this issue must be taken under great consideration to fully understand the impact that eliminating these sub trades will truly have.

Because of the limited training for these designations, how many are enrolling in Full AST and stopping when they get SSM? If you really want to prevent the problem, don't allow the MVI exam to be written until certification is complete. No wonder enrolment is down, they all try the Full AST and stop once they get what they need to stay employed (THE ABILITY TO DO AN MVI)

Being a small dealership we need trained general technicians who are capable of doing all jobs available. We do however usually have a need for an oil change, tire, undercoating, small job technician who is not looking to complete red seal status. In order to be competitive with Wal-Marts, Canadian Tires and small service stations we need to be able to employ this type of person without being forced into an apprentice program.

Check with the parts suppliers. They should be able to give some idea of the higher volume tasks being done. They might give an inside track to what is really going on in the industry.

How many tech's in the province currently hold the SSM designation and the FEB designation? As a percentage how many is this? How many apprentices stop schooling after they obtain their SSM? In this time of shortage for skilled trades' people, more options are needed, not more barriers.

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Q17. Please add any comments you have on the issue of limited training and restricted certification for service station mechanics and front end and brakes technicians:

I currently have an apprentice working at my shop who has been forced to take the "new" training courses and who was told there is no longer available a SSM test. He successfully completed his first level and acquired the proper hours to return for his second level and was denied to go to the course because it was not ready for the classroom and then told it was because of lack of attendance. These types of actions have plagued this trade in particular and now they are trying to limit our technicians and mechanics again. When I was going to my pre employment course we were told how many jobs are available because of decline in trades people and now look at what they are doing to the trade. The entire apprenticeship division is the problem backed by the government, it makes it very frustrating for the up and coming guys as well as experienced and the employers.

I kind of feel like it is the same as many of the other trades. There is a basic introduction into the trade and as you receive more experience & understanding in the trade you can move on to further your knowledge at a pace that is more suitable to your level of learning or you can stay employed at the level that you are comfortable with.

I think having these sub trades in our industry helps to keep our cost levels low for our customers.

I THINK THE TRAINING FOR THE SUB-TRADES SHOULD BE REVISITED TO REFLECT THE MORE COMPLEX BRAKE AND STEERING CONTROL SYSTEMS ON TODAY'S VEHICLES AND ALSO THE AUTOMOTIVE TRADE SHOULD BE CHECKED ON A REGULAR BASIS FOR COMPLIANCE OF TRAINING FOR THE TRADE.

I THINK WE DEFINITELY SHOULD KEEP THE SUB TRADES AND MAKE IT MANDATORY THAT EVEN TIRE INSTALLERS AND OIL CHANGERS BE REGISTERED

In a small area like Yarmouth, we need flexibility. The number of licensed AST guys may be limited because they move to the bigger centers. Having sub-trades or specialization gives more opportunities.

It will create employment and help sustain small (legit) repair shops. They should never take the sub-trade away..

I've been a licensed service station mechanic for more than 25 years. I have worked for a few other shops around including the heavy equipment trade. But I've ran my own shop for 18 years and there wasn't too many problems that I couldn't fix. The cars today are getting tougher to repair and training is getting harder to get as well as mechanics are harder to find. We have to do whatever it takes to get young blood in the industry

Make the sub-trades specialized, because that is what they essentially are. If all designations allow MVI Inspections, then this should be a standard for all designations, and then train accordingly. The FEB & SSM could be made into the same designation (specializing in front-end, suspension, brakes & alignments. No doubt this is the majority of work for small shops and tire shops. So why not fill their need

Maybe specialization is the way to go. Make the sub-trades specialized designations. Why not, even the dealerships who require full AST are replacing transmissions these days, not fixing them. So, in essence are the apprentices in full AST programs getting all the required hands-on they need.

Not every tech has the ability to become a red seal. Most of our jobs are repetitive and mundane. You need those sub trades to deal with that type of work.

One trade one licence

Originally when I got licensed, everyone took the same training, and depending on your mark gave you the Red Seal licence or a Licensed technician in NS. I would like to see the level of training revert back to that. The limited sub-trades have become an easier path and it's now lowered the standards of technicians and what we stand for. However by raising the bar to grade 12 to take the 1 year trade we are eliminating a lot of youth that have the mechanical ability and talent that is needed.

Q17. Please add any comments you have on the issue of limited training and restricted certification for service station mechanics and front end and brakes technicians:

Our company only ever required SSM or FEB designations in order to operate. By eliminating this training, some shops could be put out of business if they cannot meet the Full AST requirement. Rather than eliminate the designation, I think upgrading or Re-certification should be done to ensure accuracy or make all technicians pass an MVI Competency exam when they renew their license every five years (give some credibility to the designation rather than get rid of it)

Please tell me how do I become a service mechanic or a front end and brake technician without schooling or training

Some technicians are quite happy working in a specialized area and have no desire to further their education because of various reasons. Many older technicians are not up-to-date on the new technologies such as Hybrids and don't want to be. With the increased changes to new vehicles, brakes, front-end work, alignments, etc. might be the only game tire shops and other non-dealer shops can play unless they are willing to invest thousands of dollars in the equipment needed to service the newer models and invest in the training that goes along with it. Taking away this sub-trade may lead to more problems down the road.

The old ones should be grandfathered in fairness but again if those sub trades were not available then the only choice would be the red seal. in theory every one would have finished the extra training

We were another shop that would have has to turn down the request to be indentured for apprenticeship. The SSM designation allowed us to enrol the apprentice. Otherwise, it would have been 2 years before a spot opened up

When the technicians have their red seal they know that they have the responsibility to know everything in the trade all aspects of the industry. When you are a front end and brakes only, they feel a little more at ease at what their task should be when working. Some techs are not confident enough to take the red seal; they are just as happy being an installer.

With the addition of on-line training, access to training has fewer obstacles than before.

With the continuing and accelerating changes in the automotive sector any deletion of training is a step in the wrong direction. widening the parameters of training would better suit the needs of the industry

With what I see coming out of NSCC, there are very few that even come close to being certified as techs, heck most of them wouldn't qualify for S. S. Mech. Like anything else these people need training and skills on the job to further themselves. As a S.S. Mech., you could qualify faster as our training doesn't go as in depth as the Auto. Tech.....