
TO: Massachusetts Program Administrators (PAs), Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC) Consultants

FROM: Betty Tolkin and Joanne O'Donnell, NMR Group

SUBJECT: Analyses of Immediate Code Compliance Support Initiative Circuit Rider Surveys

CC: Pam Rathbun, Tetra Tech; Lynn Hoefgen, NMR Group; Allen Lee, Cadmus Group; Holly Farah, Cadmus Group; Althea Koburger, Cadmus Group

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This memo provides feedback from the most recent short telephone surveys of 10 individuals who used the toll-free number publicized at the Code Compliance Support Initiative (CCSI) trainings or who sent emails seeking energy code support. As of February 2, 2016, there have been 98 contacts with CLEAResult, the CCSI contractor since the Circuit Rider service began in July of 2014. Several individuals have had multiple contacts with CLEAResult including follow-up questions, so the 98 contacts have involved 77 individuals in total. NMR has been conducting five- to ten-minute telephone surveys with individuals as soon as possible after their issues are resolved to gauge the usefulness of and satisfaction with the services provided.¹ This memo provides feedback from the most recent 10 telephone surveys conducted from August 2015 through February 2, 2016.

Responses to the most recent immediate surveys of individuals contacting the CCSI with questions are similar to those reported on in previous memos; the respondents appreciate the service and generally give it high ratings. The most noteworthy aspect of the feedback provided in the current set of surveys is that respondents were much more satisfied with the total amount of time it took to resolve their questions and how their calls were initially handled—these areas received the lowest ratings in the past. Indeed, response times did improve in the second half of 2015 and the beginning of 2016 which is particularly important since a greater portion of the questions posed by the current group of respondents concerned current projects rather than hypothetical situations as in the past. As there are more contacts which may require more complicated assistance closer to the adoption of 2015 IECC in Massachusetts, the CCSI may consider recording the phone calls, emails, and other attempts made to get back to those who contact the hotline for energy code support to better track responsiveness.

As outlined in the amended proposed work plan dated May 5, 2015, NMR provided summaries of the findings from the immediate surveys of participants in the Circuit Rider component of the CCSI to the PAs and EEAC after the completion of approximately every ten immediate telephone surveys. These interim deliverables were designed to provide timely feedback to the PAs, EEAC, and implementers on how well this service operated. Since the number of contacts seeking energy code support decreased in the second half of 2015, NMR has not included immediate surveys of those contacting the CCSI with questions in the 2016 evaluation plan. However, NMR proposes to continue to monitor Circuit Rider activities and draft a short amendment to the 2016 plan to provide evaluation of this component if there is a pick-up in activity, particularly if on-site visits occur.

¹ NMR provided memos summarizing responses to the earlier immediate surveys in January, April, and July of 2015.

Usefulness and Satisfaction

The surveys asked respondents to rate the usefulness of the information provided to them on a 1-to-6 scale in which 6 is extremely useful and 1 is not at all useful. As shown in Table 1, respondents rated usefulness quite highly. Four out of 10 respondents gave a rating of 6, an additional four respondents gave a rating of 5, one respondent gave a rating of 4, and one respondent gave a rating of 3. These ratings are equal to or slightly higher than those provided from the earlier surveys for all respondents except architects; the latter gave slightly lower ratings in the most recent surveys. However, we stress that the mean ratings are based on very few responses.

Asked why the information provided was useful, the survey respondents most often said that the individuals contacted answered their questions fully and helped them understand the related code requirements. A code official noted that CLEAResult helped him show the builders that he was working with that he was correctly enforcing the code. Similarly, a builder was happy that CLEAResult provided him with the section of the building code that he needed to prove to his building inspector that his commercial building was meeting code.

The architect who provided a rating of 3 on the usefulness of the information said that his question was not adequately answered and the response was confusing; he thought part of the confusion stemmed from the fact that he called about the selective rehab of a residential project. However, he reached an agreement with the code official and did not need to call the hotline back for clarification. The engineer who provided a rating of 4 on the usefulness of the information said after he had asked the question, he found that he did not need to get an answer, so his score is simply a reflection of how much he used the information provided to him, rather than its quality.

Table 1. Usefulness Ratings of the Information Provided

Respondent Occupation	n	Usefulness Rating Aug 2015 through Feb 2016 (number of responses)						Mean Rating	
		6— Extremely Useful	5	4	3	2	1—Not at all Useful	Aug 2015– Feb 2016	Nov 2014– Feb 2016
Code official	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	5.3	5.3
Architect	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	4.0	5.3
Engineer	2	1	0	1	0	0	0	5.0	5.0
Builder	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6.0	5.4
Contractor	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	6.0	5.0
Energy efficiency consultant	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	5.0
Equipment supplier	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	NA	6.0

The survey respondents also rated their satisfaction with several components of the Circuit Rider service on a 1-to-6 scale in which 6 is extremely satisfied and 1 is not at all satisfied. As shown in .

Table 2, the mean ratings given by the current survey respondents are equal to or higher than the overall mean ratings from November 2014 through February 2016.

Respondents were most satisfied with the professional manner in which their question was resolved and the time it took to resolve their question. The professional manner in which the question was resolved has consistently received the highest mean ratings in all survey responses from November 2014 through the present. However, satisfaction with how the calls were initially handled and the amount of time it took to resolve the question had consistently received the lowest ratings in the earlier surveys (those conducted from November 2014 through July 2015); the high ratings in the current survey indicate a marked improvement in handling the requests for assistance that come into the CCSI.

The survey asked respondents who gave ratings of less than 4 to any components to explain why they were less than satisfied. Only one respondent fell into this category and he repeated his comments that are noted in the usefulness ratings: that his question was not adequately answered and the response was confusing.

Table 2. Satisfaction Ratings for the Circuit Rider Components

Aspects of Service Provided	n*	Satisfaction Rating Aug. 2015 thru Feb. 2016 (number of responses)						Mean Rating	
		6— Extr. Satis.	5	4	3	2	1—Not at all Satis.	Aug 2015– Feb 2016	Nov 2014– Feb 2016
Total amount of time it took to resolve the question	9	7	1	1	0	0	0	5.6	5.1
How the call was initially handled—information provided on process to resolve question	7**	4	2	1	0	0	0	5.4	5.0
Knowledge of the person who ultimately resolved the question	9	6	2	0	1	0	0	5.4	5.6
Professional manner in which the question was resolved	9	7	2	0	0	0	0	5.8	5.7
Overall responsiveness of the team	9	5	3	1	0	0	0	5.4	5.4

*One respondent refused to rate the individual aspects of the service provided

**Two respondents did not give a rating since their questions were answered during the initial call

Since respondent satisfaction with the total time it took to resolve their questions increased in the most recent surveys, NMR again examined the opening and closing dates for all contacts seeking energy code support. As shown in Table 3, the number of days needed to resolve questions fell dramatically for contacts received in the second half of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. Please note that the number of days shown in Table 3 do not reflect attempts that may have been made to reach the individual and resolve his or her question at an earlier time. As there are more contacts which may require more complicated assistance closer to the adoption of 2015 IECC in Massachusetts, it may be advisable for CLEAResult to record phone calls,

emails, and other attempts to reach those who contact the CCSI for support. It should also be pointed out that the percentages in Table 3 are based on a small number of contacts who have sought energy code support.

Table 3. Days Needed to Resolve Questions for all Circuit Rider Contacts

Number of Days	Percent of July 2014 thru June 2015 Contacts	Percent of July 2015 thru Feb. 2016 Contacts	Percent of All Contacts
n	69	29	98
Resolved on the same day	42%	69%	50%
Resolved on the next day	13%	3%	10%
Resolved in two to five days	7%	14%	9%
Resolved in six to ten days	18%	3%	13%
Resolved in 11 to 15 days	7%	7%	7%
Resolved in 16 to 30 days	7%	0%	5%
Resolved in 31 to 60 days	3%	0%	2%
Resolved in over 60 days	1%	0%	1%
Listed as unresolved	1%	3%	2%

Nine of the 10 respondents to the immediate survey said, in response to two separate questions, that they would use the code support service again themselves and would recommend it to others. The only one not recommending the service was the architect who, as noted earlier, believes his question was not adequately answered and the response was confusing.

Types of Projects and Timing

The immediate surveys asked respondents whether their question was related to a current project, a hypothetical situation, and/or a future project. As shown in Table 4, the August 2015 through February 2016 respondents were much more likely to say their question was related to a current project (9 out of 10 or 90%) than all the respondents from November 2014 through February 2015 (30 out of 45 or 67%).

Table 4. Type of Project and Timing

(multiple response; number of responses)

Respondent Occupation	Aug. 2015 thru Feb. 2016 Respondents				All Resp. Nov 2014 thru Feb 2016			
	n	Current Project	Future Project	Hypothetical	n	Current Project	Future Project	Hypothetical
Code official	4	4	0	0	17	11	2	6
Architect	2	2	0	0	7	5	0	2
Engineer	2	1	0	1	2	1	0	1
Builder	1	1	0	0	8	7	0	2
Contractor	1	1	0	0	3	3	0	0
Energy efficiency consultant	0	0	0	0	6	3	1	2
Equipment supplier	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2

For respondents who said their questions were related to future projects or hypotheticals, the immediate surveys asked when they expected to use the information provided. (The assumption reflected in Table 5 is that respondents with current projects would use the information immediately.) In the most recent surveys, since almost all the respondents' questions concerned current projects, the information is assumed to be used immediately and they were not asked about timing. Similarly, almost all respondents in past surveys said they would use the information provided immediately; some also added that they would be using this information in the future.

Table 5. When Expect to Use Information

(multiple response; number of responses)

Respondent Occupation	Aug. 2015 thru Feb. 2016 Respondents			All Respondents Nov. 2014 through Feb. 2016		
	n	Expect to Use Immediately	Expect to Use in the Future	n	Expect to Use Immediately	Expect to Use in the Future
Code official	4	4	0	17	17	4
Architect	2	2	0	7	7	1
Engineer	2	2	1	2	2	1
Builder	1	1	0	8	7	1
Contractor	1	1	0	3	3	0
Energy efficiency consultant	0	0	0	6	5	2
Equipment supplier	0	0	0	2*	0	1

*One respondent, in a past survey, said he was just acquiring general knowledge and didn't know when he would use it.

How Learned of the Service, Suggestions for Improvement, and Other Qualitative Data

Three of the 10 respondents to the immediate survey learned of the code support service through attending a classroom training; three additional respondents learned of it through online searches. The remaining four respondents learned of the service through word of mouth (two), attending a Webinar and attending a MassSave presentation at the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS). Online searching was a more popular source of information for the code support service than in previous surveys.

NMR's main recommendations in previous surveys have been for the CCSI encourage the use of telephone calls rather than email to submit questions and receive responses whenever possible as a way of reducing response times. The proportion of telephone inquiries in the latter half of 2015 and beginning of 2016 has remained roughly constant at 69% compared to 72% from July of 2014 to June of 2015. Response times, however, have gotten much better as shown in Table 3. This is a particularly important achievement since a greater portion of the questions have come in concerning current projects as shown in Table 4.

The survey closed by asking respondents what was most useful about the service, how they thought it could be improved, what other types of assistance they may need with the energy code, and any other comments. As in past surveys, most responses to this final question address the trainings offered by the CCSI as well as the hotline dealing with specific questions.

One code official thought the training presentations need to be longer and more detailed, possibly broken up into multiple sessions, particularly for the commercial code where many code officials are less familiar with its requirements. Another code official suggested having a

message board moderated by MassSave similar to one sponsored by a building code association. An architect suggested having the trainings focus on the 2015 IECC code.

An engineer noted that understanding when new codes are likely to be implemented and what will change would be very valuable to him:

More broadcasting to the whole building industry about the new code adoption timelines and requirements [would help]; it is very hard for the average person to know what is going on; even if it's a progress update on their [MassSave's] website that shows the timeline and a draft version of what the code will be, it would be extremely helpful to have in writing to show clients as we scope out a project... [and] make a better case for why we need to include more efficient components within the design.

At the same time, this respondent was very grateful for the service provided when he contacted the hotline.

One of the most valuable pieces was that they provided it in writing; it agreed with and validated [his company's] approach, which will be helpful when explaining to clients why we take this approach.