



RECOMMENDATIONS PRINTING MATERIALS FOR ICS CANADA TRAINING

Classroom and Virtual Training

Sandy McKinnon
Sandy.mckinnon@icscanada.ca



Printing Training Material for Courses Held in the Classroom

We are seeing more and more agencies and instructors opting to reduce the cost of training by providing electronic manuals rather than a printed manual for training in the classroom. In fact, some are attempting to conduct all training – exercising, breakouts, discussions, and instruction, all on a personal device.

Although there are obvious merits of becoming a “green” and “environmentally sensitive and responsible” organization in the classroom, this could have negative impacts on one’s abilities to instruct, and, one’s ability to learn if they commit totally to all materials to be provided and utilized exclusively in an electronic format. Also, we must keep in mind, not all students are receptive to learning using electronic manuals... much like those that still prefer to read newspapers.

It is the recommendation of ICS Canada to consider the following best practice when considering using electronic manuals and course material.

- Electronic manuals and supplementary reading and reference material can be provided electronically. Even if manuals in PDF format are not formatted with note-taking fields embedded in the material, students can and should use other apps (Word, OneNote, etc.) or paper for note taking purposes.
- When conducting exercises and discussions during breakout sessions in the classroom, **students should be provided with printed materials for the description of the exercise, for aides, forms and checklists to be used for the breakout, and for documenting any deliverables required by the exercise.** Printed materials for breakouts are being recommended because often the activities will require referencing many different items and completing forms and other deliverables all at the same time. Attempting to multitask using a small laptop screen or other personal devices may not provide the best experience for the student. Having all materials for the breakout in front of you in a printed format is much simpler to facilitate when conducting exercises.

Student Being Provided the File to Print

Some instructors/agencies have reversed the responsibility of providing a printed manual to attend training, back onto the student. Students are provided with the PDF file and it is left up to them as their choice to print the manual, or to use it on a personal device. This is not the preferred practice of preparing for a course delivery as ICS Canada does have a printing standard for the ICS Canada material. It has been experienced that some students experience many challenges providing proper binding, printing, and assembling of materials. There have been observations where students just bring a stack of unbound paper, often printed one side and sometimes they forget to print black and white. Printed materials on home printers often fail if printing large volumes of printed material (more than 400 pages for some courses) causing pages to be missing and sometimes duplication of materials. Bringing a file in to be printed by a service such as Staples can incur an inflated expense since the volume rate to reproduce one copy will be very high and a single manual may be very expensive if printing costs were to be “out of pocket”.



Printed Materials and Virtual Instructor Facilitated Training

The virtual classroom also presents its own challenges along with unique opportunities. If the student can attend training from a home or office environment, those with large or multiple screens will find that they can navigate easier between electronic documents because of the increased “real-estate” one has with the larger/multiple screens, to be able to open, view and manipulate content. Also, some very forward-thinking instructors have been able to reformat material and create breakout experiences with improved materials built specifically for collaboration and exercising. But those who are only able to participate on a small personal device (iPad /phone¹) or a laptop with a single screen, may not be able to enjoy the same learning experience as those with larger/multiple screens. Here is another instance where printed materials rather than electronic files in the hands of the students (classroom and virtually) could improve upon one’s ability to juggle forms, tables, lists, and references for breakout exercises and group discussions. In this case, students could be provided with packages of breakout material or sent electronic files of breakout material to be printed prior to attending. Although many students are becoming more comfortable with virtual collaboration, this is not the case for all. There will be those that will prefer printed materials for hands on exercises.

Using Personal/Agency Provided Devices in the Classroom

If using personal devices as readers in the classroom for viewing the PDF student manuals and supplements, the training provider must be cognizant of the possibility of having to accommodate those that many not be equipped with a personal device. Also, there is the chance that some may be challenged to properly operate devices provided by the agency as they may be unfamiliar with the operating system or device. There is also the chance that they may experience a “failure” of either personal or agency owned equipment. Hard copy student material will need to be at the ready or a cache of hardware be made available for the student to continue to be able to participate.

¹ ICS Canada does not recommend that “phones” be used to attend virtual instructor-led ICS Canada courses.