



# EDUCATION INUNDATION

Keep these tips in mind when deciding where to obtain training and education.

—BY LORI SCHIAVO—

HVACR education and training has evolved 10-fold over the last decade, due to Internet accessibility and technology enhancements, an expanded need for training, certification and licensing requirements and the good old fashioned inquisitive nature of industry professionals who love what they do and want to learn as much as they can about their trade.

Everyone has their own reasons for wanting to continue their HVACR training, be it to advance their career, start their own business or stay up-to-speed on technological advancements for the sake of their customers and themselves. All of this training begs the question: who is keeping tabs on the quality and accuracy of HVACR training and education?

No, this is not an article about oversight, government mandates and the need for more standards and regulations. It is about putting the power into the hands of those seeking to advance their knowledge, perhaps earn some credit in the process, and maybe even pass some of the more notoriously difficult industry exams.

RSES was founded in 1933 with a commitment to being the leader in training and education for professional HVACR technicians and contractors, and for good reason. The association was launched in an era when the small commercial and domestic refrigeration industry was in its infancy. Training was only available through the factory (a factory-trained expert) and it typically lasted a mere three or four weeks. The majority of work was conducted by product dealers, distributors or factory

service departments. As more installations were done the demand for independent service operators increased and the need for collecting, distributing, and exchanging ideas and information became paramount; thus, the beginning of RSES.

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To this day, RSES' mission statement remains the same—“To provide opportunities for enhanced technical competence by offering comprehensive, cutting-edge education and certification to our members and the HVACR industry. To advance the professionalism and proficiency of our industry through alliances with other HVACR associations.”

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### Education/workforce gaps

As the workforce gap continues to widen and more and more makeshift educational sites, videos and blogs appear in the marketplace, HVACR professionals need to start questioning their sources. That is not to say the sources being used are wrong, but investigating a bit into how the training materials were created and by whom can provide some much-needed validation. Bios and credentials can mean the difference between learning from a fly-by-night DIY-er with a video feed and someone who has been in the field, is properly trained and has seen their fair share of system specs, installs and troubleshooting sequences. In other words, take a moment to learn if the content you are about to read or watch is worth your time.

Another thing to keep in mind is the presentation of the training, in that professionals need to question whether the information is solely offered for the sake of a profit or if the training and technology is literally making a job more safe, efficient and accurate.

Finally, new products and technical procedures are being offered to the industry on a daily basis, many of which promise to cut workloads in half by doing much of the figuring for you, but realize that the fundamentals of HVACR are still required. Knowing the how and why a system operates the way it does will lead to more accurate troubleshooting and repair, and fewer callbacks.

### Continuing education

Continuing to invest in education after being in the field for a while is as important as the initial investment in learning the trade. As stated earlier, technology, standards and regulations are constantly evolving, so it only makes sense that professionals stay on top of these things while working in the field. There is much to be said for hands-on experience and learning from peers, but at the end of the day, it is really up

to the individual to see, process and verify that what is being done is appropriate for the task at hand.

The old adage “measure twice, cut once” can be applied to so many life scenarios, continuing education being a prime example. Before spending money and time on knowledge and hands-on experience, double-check that the source is credible. Since there are so many ways to obtain information these days, accurate and inaccurate, the responsibility for analyzing the source rests on the individual’s shoulders. Much like completing a job well, a little due diligence goes a long way.

### The next phase

The HVACR industry is ripe for change. As the qualified workforce continues to shrink, it is the responsibility of all training and certification organizations to help bring in and cultivate the next crop of professionals. Coming together with other like-minded organizations for the sake of that goal is a high-priority at RSES. If the Society does not have the training you are looking for, it will help you find what you need to start or continue your HVACR education.

In addition to learning more about RSES at [www.rses.org](http://www.rses.org), check out our helpful links page at [www.rses.org/links.aspx](http://www.rses.org/links.aspx). There is a list of associations and certifying bodies to help professionals advance themselves at all stages of their careers.

*Lori Schiavo is the Executive Vice President for RSES. She has been with the organization since 2007 when she started working on the Society’s flagship publication, RSES Journal. In that role for nearly 10 years, she has worked with the gamut of professionals in the HVACR industry. Prior to RSES, Schiavo has a long history in the B2B publishing which includes positions on magazines in the mining, printing and construction industries, among others.*