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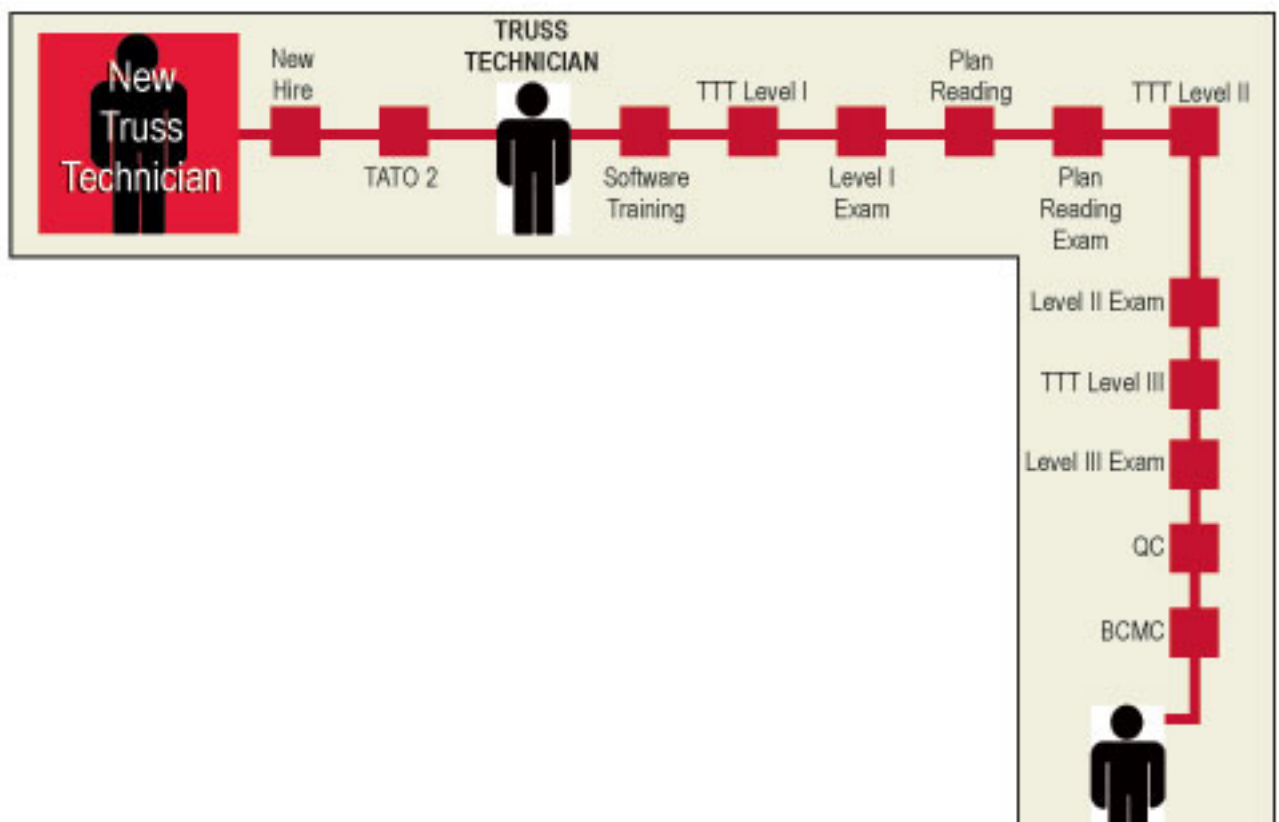
TKO Training Paths: An Educational Roadmap for New Truss Technicians by Libby Walters

[www.wtcatko.com](http://www.wtcatko.com)

*Daunted by the vast training needs of your new truss technicians? Fear not! Truss Knowledge Online points the way with a training path designed specifically for the needs of new technicians.*

In the previous three articles in this series, ([August 2004](#) & [June/July 2004](#)) we looked at WTCA's training options designed specifically for Sales and Office Staff; Design, Plant and General Managers; and New Production Crew. Last but not least, it's time to discuss the training available for new truss technicians and what they can gain from this training. New technicians may have some degree of design experience or they may be completely new to the trade. Whatever the case may be, the Truss Knowledge Online (TKO) programs allow you the flexibility to tailor the training to each individual's specific needs.

Besides the ability to modify your new hire's training path to accommodate his or her unique training needs, an added benefit of the suggested training courses is that they can be taken at any pace, at any time and any place. For instance, truss technicians with an Internet connection are able to access all courses from their work station or from their home computer. The first set of courses on this path focuses on evaluating a given technician's skill level and introducing them to the basics of the structural building component industry.





## SKILLS EVALUATION & INDUSTRY BASICS

Before you even make the hire, you may consider using TATO 1 (Technical Assessment Test Online), a hiring tool that you can administer right in the interview! The test evaluates basic math and 3-D visualization skills without calculators or design software. The candidate does not require truss or construction industry experience to take TATO 1. Brent Hendricks of Idaho Truss and Component Co. said, "I like the idea that a person does not need to have specific truss knowledge in order to answer the questions." Three dimensional visual ability and basic math skills are essential for a truss technician's success, but until TATO 1 it was almost impossible to determine from a candidate interview.

Truss Manufacturing Orientation (formerly the New Hire Program), or TMO, is the perfect course for someone who is new to the structural building components industry. TMO will give the student an overall excellent grounding in the truss industry with a brief introduction to the industry, the terms used in a component manufacturing operation, lumber details, information on metal connector plates, building codes and blue print reading. Like many of the TKO training courses, TMO is divided into ten units with quizzes at the end of each section to test the student's knowledge of the subject matter. TMO has no certification exam and can be completed within 30 hours.

TATO 2 is a great assessment tool, suited for those are seasoned truss technicians. The test is identical in format to its predecessor, TATO 1, and differs only in content. The questions are broken down into the following categories: Truss Math, Truss Standards, Structural Design, Building Codes, Wood Technology and 3D Visual Skills. TATO 2 will give you a more in-depth look at the candidate's proficiencies and will aid in setting training priorities.

"I believe this will be an excellent tool, not only for assessing current staff, but also for evaluating new hires who come to us with 'truss experience' for an interview," commented Richard A. Jamieson, Director of Design, U.S. Components, Inc.

The final stop in preliminary coursework for your new hire is proprietary software training. Although software training is a crucial component of any new truss technician's training path, WTCA does not provide training on any specific truss design software packages. Component manufacturers should contact their metal connector plate supplier or truss design software provider to get more information on the availability of this training.

## CORE DESIGN COURSES

These training options represent the fundamental basics necessary for all truss technicians,

whether they are novices or have some degree of truss design experience.

**TTT Level I Online** introduces truss technicians to design and engineering fundamentals. Students learn about factors affecting truss design from specification to installation. Level I has been a long-time staple course for new truss technicians, as it gives students a solid base from which to expand their design skills. Students who complete the course and pass the TTT Level I Exam achieve Level I Certification, which is valid for two years.

**TTT Level II Online** introduces advanced concepts of math and load development. Students learn essential provisions of standards like ANSI/TPI 1, NDS®, and ASCE 7; and perform calculations for live, dead, snow, wind and seismic loads. Students who pass the TTT Level II Exam achieve Level II Certification.

**TTT Level III Online** takes students through discussions of advanced technical issues like truss repair, practical design solutions, truss testing, quality control issues, permanent bracing, risk management and liability avoidance. Level III is open to all Level II certified truss technicians as well as design managers and engineers. Students who pass the TTT Level III Exam achieve Level III Certification.

**TTT Plan Reading** helps truss technicians to develop their plan reading skills. Students learn terminology, symbols, scales, layouts and truss and material take-offs. Students review real residential and commercial plans, focusing specifically on the factors that affect truss design. The course includes several sections of material ranging from an introduction to truss documents (shop drawings, truss design drawings and truss placement diagrams) to simple truss and construction math. There is a certification exam at the end of this course. An online version of this live course is currently in development, scheduled to be available by early next year.

## **ADDITIONAL INDUSTRY TRAINING**

Seminars from the 2002 and 2003 Building Component Manufacturer's Conference (BCMC) provide truss technicians with the latest topics presented by their peers, fellow component manufacturers. The presentation topics are chosen from component manufacturers' recommendations of the most critical issues their companies face. Seminars of particular interest for truss technicians are the 2002 Technical track and the Insurance and Risk Management track. The Economic Forecast and the WTCA Annual Meeting also provide technicians with details about the industry's economic condition and a review of WTCA's work that may help with their understanding of how the programs that we are working on can help your business.

Following the completion of the training courses above, new technicians will have a firm grasp on design concepts and a well-rounded knowledge about manufacturing, risk management and current component manufacturing issues in general.

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