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As we all struggle through the changes forced upon us by COVID-19, Common Arc is doing its best to make sure that we are all prepared to move forward when this crisis is over. We have been in contact with ASME to inquire whether there is any possibility of extending the period for welder certifications beyond the current 6 month provision. We have been told that this is something that ASME is reviewing, but it will likely only allow for the extension of certifications for welders who were employed at the time of the COVID-19 shutdown. The possible amendment will not extend the certification for welders who were already not employed at the time of the COVID-19 shutdown. Therefore, Common Arc recognizes the need to keep as many welder certifications current as possible. This is going to require cooperation and flexibility between Union Locals and contractors so that the membership is able and ready to go out and work. So how can we do this?

- All Union Locals should check the Common Arc website to determine which members are likely to have their certification expire within the next 30 days. Those members who are going to expire and are currently working need to be updated by the contractor for whom they are working. Contractors should also check the status off all welders they are currently employing and be diligent in regularly sending updates to Common Arc.
- A welder who is going to expire and is not working can be updated at the Local under the review of a single contractor-which will update their certifications for all contractors with whom the welder previously held certifications. We understand that many Locals have closed due COVID-19; however, in an effort to be proactive and ensure that your members will be ready to work when things reopen, we believe that this can be accomplished with preparation and precautions. The Local could offer testing with only a single contractor present to extend the certification of a welder for all contractors with whom the welder was previously certified. Limiting the number of welders tested per day, having welders wait in their individual cars until it is time for them to be tested, and providing personal protective equipment, including masks and gloves, may conform with your State's quarantine guidelines and allow us to keep as many welders prepared to return to work as possible. Yes, this will require the Local to open its doors a day or two each month. **Each Local, in cooperation with one or more contractor, needs to understand the quarantine requirements in their jurisdiction and consider options to bring welders into the Local for updating.**
- If a welder's certifications do expire, Common Arc is exploring the possibility of offering renewal testing at its testing sessions. This would entail either adding an addition day to the test schedule exclusively for renewal testing of those welders whose certifications expired during the COVID-19 shut-down or adding a renewal only testing event, depending upon the number of welders that will require renewal testing. Renewal testing is less time consuming and requires only a single position for each welding process. With a renewal test, it will update prior certifications for those contractors the welder had previously been certified.

If there are any changes made to the Code, we will promptly notify the Union Locals. However, we recommend exploring all possible options, including those set forth above so we can all come out of this crisis as best we can. In the end, taking these steps to be proactive will ultimately allow for members to return to work promptly and without the added time and expense of recertification.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ronnie L. Traxler".