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NEMRA Lighting, IES, and Lutron Launch Controls Educational Curriculum – Expanding Stepped Educational Curriculum

New Controls Path for Lighting Industry to Master Controls Applications, Technologies, System Integration and Advanced Strategies

Carmel, Indiana – November 19, 2026 – The National Electrical Manufacturers Representatives Association (NEMRA) Lighting Division, Illuminating Engineering Society (IES), and Lutron today announced the Controls Educational Curriculum (CEC) as an addition to the NEMRA Lighting Stepped Educational Curriculum – the multi-tier online educational program launched in 2025. The CEC path is an alternate option to Step 3 and Step 4 for agents and manufacturers who want to specialize in controls.

In the NEMRA Lighting division's 2026 survey of 35 members, the division received many requests for a lighting-specific education pathway for new hires, sales professionals, project teams, controls specialists, and emerging leaders. The CEC is a focused, practical curriculum that turns membership into a usable benefit for controls specialists.

"With the new CEC, NEMRA Lighting is addressing workforce pressures members face with industry-specific education, and business relationships needed to develop people, navigate change, and grow," stated Jim Johnson, President of NEMRA. “This is specialized controls training to advance the lighting industry.”

The CEC also answers workforce pressures members identified in a recent NEMRA Lighting survey. In the survey, 37% cited recruiting or skilled labor shortages as a major challenge, and 31% also cited workforce development and training. Members

also said they want education that is focused, practical, and immediately applicable — 77% prefer 30-minute webinars. The CEC levels arebuilt as focused, practical modules aimed at real applications, so participants build the credentialed controls expertise they need.

"Lutron is pleased to partner with NEMRA Lighting and IES to build the Controls Educational Curriculum, and to support NEMRA Lighting through our membership. Whether you are onboarding a new employee or bringing a rep agent up-to-speed on controls, the curriculum gives them a clear, structured path to the knowledge they need to confidently serve their customers. NEMRA Lighting offers tremendous value to its members by consistently investing in the people who make the industry work. — Brian Donlon, Vice President & General Manager, Sales Operations, Lutron Electronics Co., Inc., and member, NEMRA Lighting Advisory Council.

The Stepped Educational Curriculum, launched in 2025, is a multi-tier online educational program developed by NEMRA Lighting in partnership with IES. The curriculum is comprised of four progressive levels, each tailored to meet real customer and application scenarios, and enhanced with expert input around key lighting topics to ensure the lighting agents and manufacturers can most effectively and expertly serve their audiences.

SEC Level One: Lighting Trained (8.5 hours, up to 5.5 CEUs) — The entry point for all participants, the Level One course is the gateway for newcomers or those refining their expertise. This foundational online course establishes a core understanding of lighting basics, control principles, terminology, and system understanding to confidently engage with distributors, contractors, and specifiers.

SEC Level Two: Lighting Educated (10 hours, up to 10 CEUs) — Building on foundational knowledge, Level Two teaches advanced skills to sell lighting and controls. Designed for lighting agents and manufacturers, it covers product positioning, customer conversations, solution-based selling, and common applications. Perfect for sales, quotations, or project management roles, the course helps the student better understand customer needs and provides effective guidance.

SEC Level Three: Lighting Specialized (10 hours, up to 9.5 CEUs) — Advance from lighting generalist to specialist with training designed for working with designers, specifiers, architects, and engineers. This course covers the full lifecycle of a lighting system — from bidding to performance. Learn to navigate specifications, tackle challenges, and add value at every project phase.

SEC Level Four: Lighting Professional (8 hours, up to 8 CEUs) — The Level Four course helps you master advanced lighting and controls, including layout, system

integration, zoning, and design. Designed for design-build teams, integrators, and high-performance projects, it covers visual comfort, spatial intent, interoperability, sustainability, and lighting quality. For agents and manufacturers, it's about becoming trusted advisors and taking a more strategic consultative approach.

For participants who choose the controls path, the new CEC offers an alternate Step 3 and Step 4. As IES describes it, "The Controls Educational Curriculum (CEC) features an alternate Step 3 and Step 4. Building on the foundational knowledge established through NEMRA's Stepped Educational Curriculum, the CEC provides a clear path to mastering controls applications, technologies, system integration, and advanced strategies while developing the expertise to become a trusted resource for customers and partners."

CEC Step 3 Level: Controls Specialized (4 hours) - The CEC Level 3 builds from SEC Level One and SEC Level Two with a path for the controls expertise participants who need to serve as a trusted resource for customers and partners — covering controls applications, technologies, system integration, and advanced strategies — and prepares participants to collaborate with lighting designers, specifiers, architects, and engineers.

Its modules are Lighting Control Fundamentals; Lighting Controls for New Construction and Retrofit Projects: Navigating Codes and Compliance; Daylight Shading and Controls; Creating Dynamic and Human-Centered Lighting Environments; and Daylight Shading and Controls — Fabric Considerations. The CEC will also provide a CEC Level 4, Controls Professional, extending the controls path for advanced practitioners.

The CEC was built with deep contributions from across the lighting community. Brian Donlon, Vice President & General Manager, Sales Operations at Lutron Electronics Co., Inc. and a member of the NEMRA Lighting Advisory Council, was a key partner in building the curriculum, and Lutron has been a steadfast supporter of NEMRA Lighting through its membership. Lutron’s Linda Backo orchestrated the curriculum materials and the sequence in which they built on one another. Brienne Willcock, Associate Executive Director of Strategy, Standards, and Industry Engagement at IES, also contributed significantly to the program.

Courses one and two are free with NEMRA Lighting Membership. Courses three and four — including the CEC's alternate Step 3 and Step 4 — require both NEMRA Lighting and IES membership. This is the recommended next step in professional development. Membership offers benefits — knowledge, mentorship, connections — and additionally shapes both personal and professional involvement in the lighting

industry. The CEC exemplifies member value. This is a program members asked for, built for the way the lighting industry works, and available today.

"NEMRA Lighting is being proactive about education again — and that matters," said Brienne Willcock, Associate Executive Director, Strategy, Standards, and Industry Engagement at IES. "The Controls Educational Curriculum gives members a clear, optional path into the controls expertise their customers are asking for. By committing to structured learning in controls, members don't just add a skill; they elevate their professionalism and credibility and position themselves as the trusted partners, specifiers, and customers want to work with."

The NEMRA Lighting Stepped Educational Curriculum, now including the Controls Educational Curriculum, eliminates barriers to professional growth with a clear, structured pathway from foundational knowledge to advanced controls specialization. Course participants receive lighting knowledge and CEUs to apply toward their Lighting Certification (LC), a Certificate of Completion for each course, a Credentialed Verification for their LinkedIn profile, and industry-wide recognition by NEMRA Lighting. By completing these courses, the organization states that lighting agents and manufacturers will position themselves as knowledgeable, trusted partners ready to meet the evolving demands of the industry.

To begin taking the courses within the Stepped Educational Curriculum, including the new Controls Educational Curriculum, or for additional information, visit https://www.nemra.org/nemra-lighting/stepped-educational-curriculum/.

About Illuminating Engineering Society (IES)

Established in 1906, the Illuminating Engineering Society is the recognized technical and educational authority on illumination. Our mission is to improve the lighted environment by bringing together those with lighting knowledge and translating that knowledge into actions that benefit the public. We provide professional development, publications, networking, and educational opportunities to our global membership of engineers, architects, designers, educators, students, contractors, distributors, utility personnel, manufacturers, and scientists. Through our ANSI-accredited process, we publish and maintain the Lighting Library®, with over 100 standards written by subject matter experts. To learn more, visit www.ies.org.

About NEMRA Lighting Division

Established in 1969, the National Electrical Manufacturers Representatives Association (NEMRA) is a nonprofit association. NEMRA Lighting is a division of NEMRA, comprised of leading lighting agents and top manufacturers within the

lighting and controls sector. The division provides a competitive edge through its commitment to advocacy, education, and networking. Guided by the expertise of the NEMRA Lighting Council, the division develops impactful programs, such as the Stepped Educational Curriculum, in partnership with IES. *The Future of Lighting Starts Here.* For more information, visit nemra.org/nemra-lighting.

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