

The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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Safety at the IBEW's Core

Since the union's earliest days, one of the IBEW's top objectives has been "to promote reasonable methods of work." It's little wonder that our founders considered this a priority: In 1891, safety standards were scarce, and electrical workers were dying on the job at twice the rate of workers in other fields. Back then, when it came to safety, no one else was looking out for our safety.

Over the past 127 years, working people have made great progress, in part because unions like the IBEW have pushed for legal standards and best practices in workplace safety. We value safety so much here at the IBEW that we placed the word atop the five values of our union's Code of Excellence, ahead of *Professionalism*, *Accountability*, *Responsibility*, and *Quality*.



Over the past year in the U.S., for example, a rule requiring employers to keep accurate records of workplace injuries was rolled back, and the number of Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors was slashed nearly 10 percent in 2017.

In that kind of environment, it's critical that we continue to take the initiative to make sure all our IBEW sisters and brothers go home safely at the end of the day. And there are plenty of examples where IBEW locals are taking the lead to keep members safe.

With underground line work becoming increasingly common, Chicago Local 9 members collaborated with signatory contractor Aldridge Electric to design and build a mobile, state-of-the-art trailer to safely train workers across the country.

For years, laws in almost every U.S. and Canadian jurisdiction have re-

quired motorists to slow down and move at least one lane away from emergency personnel working on roadway incidents. Thanks in part to persistent lobbying by IBEW activists—most recently, by Seattle Local 77—more than 30 states now extend the same protection to linemen and other utility workers.

That's the IBEW difference. Our members and leaders know that working safely helps prevent deaths and serious injuries on the job; and, with or without regulations, we can never afford to let down our guard. While it can be tempting to take shortcuts and skip steps, IBEW members demonstrate the Code of Excellence by following safety procedures to the letter. It's what keeps us and our union sisters and brothers safe on the job. And there's nothing more important than that.

WORKING SAFE IS CRUCIAL

In 2016:

- » **5,190 workers died on the job in the U.S.** (U.S. Department of Labor)
- » **905 workers died on the job in Canada** (Assoc. of Workers' Compensation Boards)

Hard-won safety regulations, along with technological improvements, have improved safety standards at the local, state, provincial, and federal levels. But unfortunately, enforcement too often can fall victim to political pres-



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email theSPARQ@ibew.org



“Safety, Safety and Safety”

There are some fundamental responsibilities that IBEW members in the utility industry should always undertake, whether they work in the field on a truck, in a power plant or in any other job a utility company has to offer. One of those responsibilities is safety, and it's one that ties in perfectly with the Code of Excellence.

The Code of Excellence is essentially a promise that IBEW members make to do what they are supposed to do on the job, to fulfill their end of the bargain. In this regard, safety is a must.

IBEW members make sure that all jobs start with a pre-job brief and keep safety in the forefront. In the summer months, heat is a critical topic in that brief. When it's hot outside, supervisors must emphasize the importance that everyone stays hydrated.

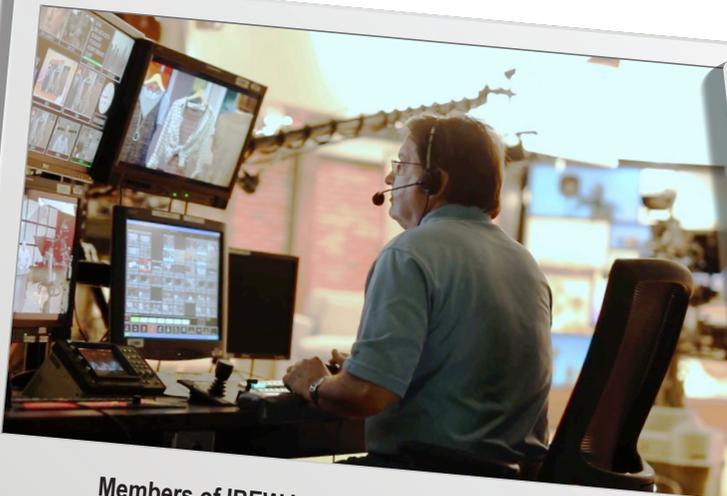
The IBEW's commitment to safety doesn't stop once the job has started. The Code of Excellence requires IBEW sisters and brothers to keep an eye on one another, making sure no one puts themselves in harm's way. With safety first, it's second nature to assess the surroundings to make sure work areas are safe and with little chance for summer heat complications. Dehydration can be very dangerous, which



in return could make members a danger to themselves and others.

The sentiment “I am my brother and sister's keeper” is embedded in the Code. We need to make sure that all IBEW members are doing what they need to do to return home safely every day. Years ago, Fort Pierce, Fla., Local 627 Foreman B.J. Davis, summed it up best. There are three words you need to know to work in the utilities, he said: “Safety, safety and safety.”

SPARQ GOES LOCAL



Members of IBEW Local 4 in St. Louis believe the Code of Excellence is improving their jobs and local union.



IBEW Local 4 represents broadcasting professionals throughout the St. Louis region, including camera operators, news videographers and assignment editors.