

Insider

&

eSource



2021 Year in Review

True to Our Mission

When the COVID-19 health crisis first hit, the number-one issue of the day was survival. The lightning quick shift to remote work forced companies to develop short-term tactics that are not optimized for long-term balance and sustainability. As the Nation continues to struggle with COVID-19, it is important that IMEA remains steady to our course of action, **our mission statement**.

Functioning as the statewide trade association representing the issues and concerns of municipally owned and operated electric utilities, provides value to your ability to meet your municipal utility's needs. IMEA is committed to providing the latest training in all facets of safety as well as keeping you abreast of cutting-edge technology and resources including leadership development, journeyman / apprentice training and customized programs directed toward not just meeting our member's need but exceeding all expectations. This mission statement has kept us true to the course of actions that guided us through these difficult times.

The utility industry has a long history of enforcing high standards when it comes to workplace safety. This attention to safety is imperative due to the nature of the work and the hazards your employees face, both in their environment and with regards to the equipment. New challenges are emerging, however, that could affect the ability of municipals to maintain these standards and result in significant costs caused by inadequate safety practices.



We will always face challenges; they will vary in degree, but we will always have them. To confront these challenges successfully, IMEA assists in putting the measures in place to protect worker safety as well as the liability and reputation of our members. While there will always be risk, it needs to be mitigated at every opportunity, and that poses some distinct challenges:

Managing Training Needs

Training is a vital part of safety management as it greatly reduces the risk of workplace accidents and is a necessary part of workplace compliance. However, while every worker within an organization has training needs, they vary depending on their job.

Meeting Compliance Requirements

For organizations to be compliant, they need to have a full understanding of safety legislation and industry regulations, and then have proof that these are being met. However, one of the biggest challenges for most organizations is recordkeeping. Verifying ongoing compliance and keeping on top of documentation renewal dates becomes a huge headache. The problem, of course, is that these records are the first port of call if your organization is visited by an inspection officer.

Finding Enough Time

With countless workers and responsibilities to manage, leadership often struggles to prioritize and manage their workload. If you decide to sit at your desk and trawl through multiple spreadsheets to verify workplace compliance, you can't also be onsite monitoring worker activity.

Meanwhile, if you must spend hours onboarding new workers and delivering training, you have far less time to keep on top of ever-changing regulatory requirements.

IMEA has continued to make it their mission to provide educational resources that improve the learning experience of all member employees and assist our members overcome these challenges. Any process that brings all levels within the organization together to work on a common goal that everyone holds in high value will strengthen the organizational safety culture. Worker safety and health is a unique area that can do this. It is one of the few initiatives that offer significant benefits for the front-line work force.

Blue Chip Casino Hotel & Event Center Michigan City, IN.

***IMEA Annual Meeting &
Vendor Expo
October 11 – 13, 2022***

Registration Coming in May 2022!

Understanding Bad Safety Habits and How to Correct Them

Every workplace, job site, and organization has unique challenges when it comes to safety. That's because every workforce, including suppliers contractors, is composed of unique individuals who have diverse backgrounds and experiences. One worker may identify a danger that another worker may not. Or one worker may be quicker to recognize a dangerous situation than others. In the worst cases, some workers may have been "normalized" on a different job site and now bring their bad habits to their current workplace.

Fortunately, organizations can change behavior to get staff operating at the same safety performance level and prevent potential incidents that could lead to supply chain disruption. The first step is to understand how people function.

Safety in Numbers and New Routines

It's easy for workers to develop bad habits and become normalized, meaning that they no longer regard an action as dangerous because previously doing the action didn't result in a bad outcome. This is learned behavior done through routine. An action performed enough times can become instinctual and performed without thinking. That's why a worker may knock a sharp tool off a table and attempt to catch it before it hits the ground without considering that the object may cut them. Because of this, one of the first things cooks learn in the kitchen is to let knives fall. Doing so allows them to rewire their thinking and identify dangers before acting. For example, a worker with rewired habits that comes across a spilled chemical may assess the situation, like the magnitude of the spill or the type of chemical, before deciding on the best response.

Since the workforce is composed of different workers with different habits, it's a good idea to have the group socialize their safety practices.

Not only does socialization help share safety initiatives, but it also holds workers accountable to each other. When employees have safety top of mind, incident rates drop, and supply chain disruption is minimized.



Rewiring Responses to Hazardous Situations

Getting the workforce to make safe decisions is the goal of any safety leader. But what steps can a company take to rewire bad habits into good ones? It won't happen overnight, but a good plan of action is to create a safety procedure that breaks down instances of potential danger into three basic steps:

1. **Observe and Identify:** Hazardous areas should be clearly marked so that workers can be alerted to danger and can recognize abnormal states in those spaces.
2. **Think and Reason:** The worker should gather as much information about the incident as the situation allows. A biological spill, like blood, needs to be handled differently than a flammable substance, like fuel.
3. **Execute and Compare:** The worker follows the plan he or she decided on, then shares the results with other workers. Not only does this help the workforce through social knowledge, but the results can also be tested against other workers' experiences, thereby refining future actions.

Of course, companies will want to adapt this process into something that works for their specific environments. However, through these broad steps, organizations can reduce the time it takes workers to detect hazards, develop assessment skills in employees, and create more cohesion among the staff. Best of all, workers will be safer and supply chain risk is reduced.

IMEA Workshop Calendar

2022

January

12 Supervisory Development Series: Session One (Mishawaka)

26 Excavation Competent Person (Lebanon)

February

8 & 9 Supervisor Safety (Lebanon)

16 Supervisory Development Series: Session two (Mishawaka)

March

9 – 11 Apprentice Top-Out Exam #031918 (Scottsburg)

16 Supervisory Development Series: Session Three (Mishawaka)

21 – 25 IMEA 612 Intermediate Workshop #032320 (Scottsburg)

April

4 - 8 IMEA 613 Advanced Workshop #031819 (Scottsburg)

12 - 13 Line Clearance Arborist Certification (Frankfort)

25 -29 IMEA 611 Basic Workshop #041921 (Scottsburg)

May

2 - 13 IMEA 610 Wood Pole Climbing Workshop #050222 (Scottsburg)

24 - 26 IMEA 212 Transformer Theory & Connections (Scottsburg)

June

7 - 8 Working it Hot - Insulate / Isolate (Scottsburg)

August

22 - 9/2 IMEA 610 Wood Pole Climbing Workshop #082222 (Scottsburg)

September

12 - 16 IMEA 613 Advanced Workshop #093019 (Scottsburg)

21 - 23 Apprentice Top-Out Exam #100118 (Scottsburg)

26 - 30 611 Basic Workshop #092721 (Scottsburg)

October

11 - 13 IMEA Annual Meeting & Vendor Expo (Blue Chip Casino, Michigan City, IN.)

25 - 27 IMEA 212 Transformer Theory & Connections (Scottsburg)



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