



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Maximizing Utility Industry "SAFETY" Safety Message

The notion of lineman safety is certainly not new within the utility industry. It's literally the #1 stated goal of any electric utility worth its salt, and it is a particularly important concept for linemen during restorations. The reasons are obvious – bad weather, falling limbs, stress, fatigue, resource limitations, debris-covered roads, downed wires – you name it.

Statistics tell us that lineman safety has markedly improved over the past few decades, but the sad truth is that there are still preventable deaths and disfigurements that occur each and every year.

Metrics related to lineman safety metrics have gotten better within the utility industry over the past few decades, but for many electric utilities, there is still room for improvement. In general, it is recommended that electric utilities, when developing lineman safety processes and protocols, make it as easy as possible for personnel to follow the recommended actions, and solicit feedback during the development process to understand their needs, wants and concerns.

From a day-to-day perspective, safety information should be embedded into all crew shift briefings, linemen should be required to attend regular safety training sessions, PPE should be inspected for compliance daily, and each crew should have a designated person responsible for making sure that all safety protocols are being followed by all crew members.

It is understood that safety can be redundant at times, but it needs to be understood by employees that we all need to be reminded to stay focused on working safely. The same old hazards are often the ones that get people injured. OSHA's Fatal Four construction hazards are an example of this. It is known that falls, electrocutions, struck-by, and caught-in or between incidents are the main causes for the overwhelming majority of fatalities in the construction industry yet it reoccurs year after year.

Do not get complacent with the hazards of your work, and do not view some redundancy in a safety program as a negative.