



## Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



### Forming Safe Habits

Of course, telling people that they need to learn and practice good safety habits is the easy part. The more difficult part is actually forming those habits. So, what can you do to tackle this obstacle? Here are two strategies to consider.

1. **Practice a task until you can't get it wrong.** You know exactly what it's like to operate on autopilot. For example, maybe you drove home from work yesterday but didn't remember anything about the drive until you pulled onto your street. Sound familiar? Once an action or task becomes a habit, our brains don't require the same amount of energy to complete it – we will simply perform the action or task without needing to think much about it. So, work on your own and with your crew members to ensure repetitive job tasks are done the safe, correct way every time. Habits will be formed, and workers will be less likely to make errors even if autopilot is on.
2. **Stop before critical steps to re-engage your brain.** There are certain critical actions that utility workers must engage in to complete their tasks. Once they're complete, some of those actions can't be undone. So, these types of actions should be identified prior to the start of work, and the employee or employees responsible should stop before performing them. After stopping, the employee should take a minute to clear their head, look around, assure their full attention is on the task, ask any questions they may have and develop a new plan if necessary. Then they can proceed to complete the task.