

ESOURCE NEWSLETTER

From My Desk

When Every Job Is Different: SOP's Aren't The Answer

There's a saying in this trade: no two poles are the same. And anyone who's spent time hanging off one knows that's the truth. Yet, somewhere along the way, our industry started acting like it could turn linework into a factory job and pushing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as if they could make field work "one size fits all."

They can't. And trying to make them fit is missing what makes a lineman a professional in the first place.

The Field Isn't a Factory

Factories thrive on repetition. Every part, every motion, every outcome is predictable. That's where SOPs shine. But linework? Linework happens where nature, infrastructure, and urgency all collide. You might be framing crossarms under a clear sky on Tuesday and replacing broken poles on a circuit in freezing rain by Wednesday. One job might have easy access and stable footing; the next has you working knee-deep in muck beside traffic with equipment.

No written procedure can account for that kind of variability. And when someone away from the jobsite tries to enforce one, it can actually increase risk and forcing crews to work "by the book" instead of utilizing their training, judgment, and reasoned sense.

Definition of Reasoned Sense: Sound judgment based on rigorous study of an issue.



The Desk vs. the Dirt

Here's the problem: too many SOPs are written by people who haven't turned a bolt or pulled a span of wire in years and sometimes decades, and in some cases, never. They mean well, but the further someone gets from the dirt, the easier it is to forget how unpredictable real field conditions are.

From behind a desk, it's tempting to think safety is a matter of paperwork and consistency. Out in the field, safety is about adaptability, communication, and trust. It's about knowing when a plan doesn't fit reality and having the experience and authority to change it.

If you value compliance over competence, you send a message that checking boxes matters more than thinking. That's how skilled trades become bureaucratic. And that's how you lose good linemen not just to burnout, but to frustration.

Principles Over Procedures

That's not to say we shouldn't have standards. The line trade runs on them, minimum approach distances, grounding, communication protocols, PPE. These principles are the backbone of safety. But principles aren't the same as procedures.

A procedure tells you how to do something. A principle tells you why. The best linemen know the why and that's what lets them adjust when the how no longer fits the situation.

The safest crews aren't the ones who memorize every line of an SOP. They're the ones who can look at a live job, assess the hazards, talk it through, and make smart, safe decisions even when the book says otherwise.

A Trade That Thinks on Its Feet

The line trade has always been about judgment and not blind obedience. The more we try to standardize judgment out of the job, the more we lose what makes this trade special.

SOPs can guide, but they can't replace experience, teamwork, and instinct. They can't tell you how to rig a pole when your digger truck can't get access, or how to work safely through the night when every hour matters.

Only linemen can do that, the men and women who live this work every day.

So let's stop pretending a binder can do their thinking for them. Trust the craft. Trust the training and trust the people who keep the lights on, not because they followed a checklist, but because they knew how to adapt when it mattered.

Welcome to our newest IMEA Associate Members!

J&J Electric of Indiana Sales

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Construction Group LLC Sales

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Safety Test & Equipment Co. Sales

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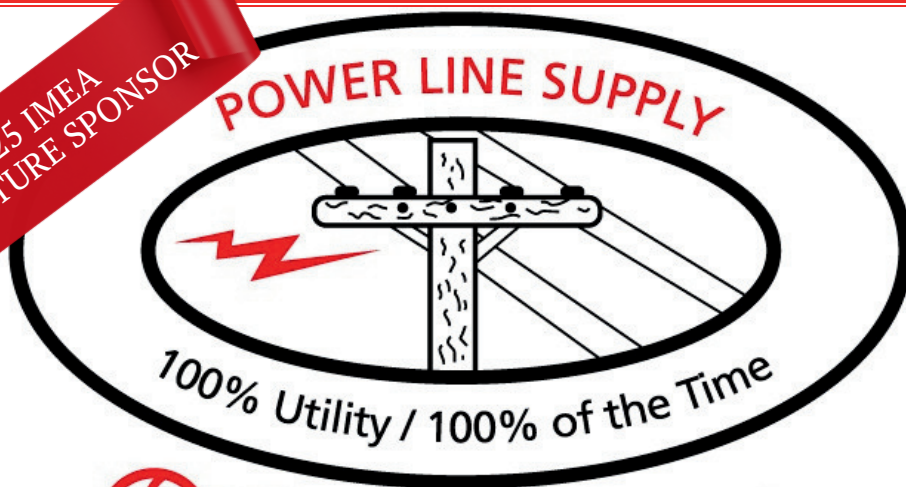
Utility and Industrial Products Sales

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WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE IMEA LINEMAN TRAINING INSTITUTE

- Better Student-to-Instructor Ratio at 10:1 versus larger schools
- Each lineman instructor has at least 20+ years of experience
- Diverse instructor staff. Many of our linemen have not only over 30 years' experience but are well versed in substation, overhead distribution, underground utility construction, and transmission.
- Our instructors are patient, knowledgeable, consistent, and collaborative with students-not adversarial.
- In-house FULL CDL training and testing facilities. This cannot be emphasized enough as obtaining a CDL is critical to job placement, and IMEA makes obtaining a CDL very easy and affordable versus other programs. MOST schools will help you only obtain the permit versus earning the entire CDL. We do ALL of the training and TESTING in-house, on-site.
- Job placement services and career planning services.
- IMEA is a Non-Profit Organization, unlike other schools so we can provide the same training at a significantly lower cost.
- On-site lodging.



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*Enrollment packages available.
Please visit: [www.imea.com /
lineman training institute](http://www.imea.com/lineman_training_institute)*

**INDIANA MUNICIPAL
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LINEMAN TRAINING INSTITUTE

OUR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



Personal Protection Equipment and Procedures

Students will learn about safety working procedures and personal protection equipment.



Electrical Systems

Students will learn the basics of the entire electrical system from generation through transmission, distribution, and conversion.



Basic Electricity

The students will be taught the fundamentals of practical and mathematical application of Direct Current and Alternating Current.



Transformers

Students will learn how and why transformers are used, banked, energized and the various configurations of both Delta and Wye.



Personal Protective Grounding

Students will learn how and why companies work on transmission and distribution lines as well as all equipment and methods used when working.



Rigging And Knot Tying

Students will learn how to tie specific knots, splice rope and learn the proper use of various ropes, slings, block and tackle.

Why Us?

Are You Ready To Begin Your Career Ahead Of Your Competitors?

Our lineman school program will allow you to begin your career ahead of all the rest. Our students have experience performing the jobs of a lineworker, as well as obtaining professional knowledge of the industry while they proceed through our program. Our students are well equipped to stand out from the interview to the actual job. Our program will provide an outlet for electric companies to search for new qualified applicants.

Our students will be able to enter the industry with the technical skills that their employers can't pass up!

Do you want to learn from Experienced and Knowledgeable Linemen?

The lineman school instructors at IMEA Lineman Training Institute have extensive real world experience in power generation, transmission and distribution. Their exceptional understanding of the industry and what companies are looking for makes our program a cut above other schools. Our students will have hands-on experience in the trade and be coached in problem-solving skills in order to help them excel in their work.

Do you want to be able to graduate and have the opportunities for immediate positions anywhere? Then this trade is the right career for you. IMEA Lineman Training Institute provides its lineman school graduates with a listing of municipalities that will be useful in your search. Our instructor's connections with the leaders of the trade will also give the students of IMEA Lineman Training Institute the upper hand at finding a career. Our students will be trained, not only to look for the job, but to find jobs. A career planning class is required to help our students create a resume and learn to find their own jobs.

So is it what you're looking for?



IMEA
INDIANA MUNICIPAL
ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

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Electric Association**

**IMEA Lineman
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