



TAILGATING

From the Business Manager's Desk

In our current environment we have seen changes on all of our contracts. The economy has had a great effect on our contracts as well as the current political landscape, add on an aging workforce among other things and you have a recipe for good and bad things to happen. We have had 5 negotiations since I came into the Business manager roll and have 2 more to complete before the end of the year. We have seen how companies are dealing with issues, some good some bad. We've also seen how the long-lasting effects of COVID has hit our utility contracts. I don't think anyone would have forecasted the shortage in materials that we are seeing currently, and this has a large affect on our day-to-day work.

One thing we are seeing is the battle for qualified skilled labor, some companies recognize this, and others choose not to. Those that are recognizing it are making changes and thinking long term on what they need to do to attract talented workers and retain them. We are even seeing the same issue on our law enforcement contracts, there is a battle for qualified help in that field and are opportunities out there. Unfortunately, we've lost a large number of Lineman on one of our contracts over the last few years and we are seeing an increase in safety issues. When you lose qualified help, it starts a snowballing effect. You have more people on staff that are in the learning phase, so the seasoned crews have to pay more attention to what's going on with the new ones to keep them out of harms way. Your qualified crews also have to do more after-hours work, creating frustrations and taking time away from home life. This results in an environment where people start rushing and getting frustrated.

On a couple of our contracts, we are seeing a large number of new leaderships, this takes time for them to learn as well. A majority of these leaders are doing a good job and working with the crews to learn and do what's right. Unfortunately, we are also seeing some new leadership that thinks they already know everything and do not want to ask questions or take the time to learn, which also creates issues. We must be diligent and speak up when these situations arise. We must be considerate in helping these new leaders learn the business, just as we were given the opportunity to learn our trades. One thing that is for certain, safety is always priority number one, keep an eye out for each other and let's make sure we are taking care of each other through these changes we are experiencing.

In closing, effective October 3rd of this year, our contract at DAEC has ended. This was another casualty of the environment and political landscape we are living in. In its hay day, the Nuclear Plant employed 700+. This is a major loss for the communities that benefited from those that worked there. Though the economic fallout will be felt immediately, the full effects of it will take years recognize just how big of a loss it was. We had a great group of members there and unfortunately, they are the biggest victims of this plant closing. In my short time in the office, I was amazed to hear the stories on the refueling process and the amazing safety record this facility was able to maintain. I had the pleasure of serving on E-Board with the late Bill Spence and their current Steward and Executive Board member Brad Rick. I learned a lot from both of these people, and I can't thank them enough for their service.

In Solidarity,

Jon Van Zante



Lineman, Corey Birkel

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Alliant Energy Safety Culture and OSHA

OSHA was created in April of 1971.

How Companies implemented the Safety Culture to employees through the years:

1970's Don't Get Hurt.

1972 Get Caught getting Hurt and Get Fired. This led to employees being counterproductive.

1980 – 1990 Accident Occurs:

- Discipline Employee
- Create New Policy
- Enforce New Policy

Another accident happens:

- Discipline Employee
- Create New Policy
- Enforce New Policy

This should ring a bell with those hired in the 1990's.

All employees received a letter in December from the Executive Safety Leadership Team (Vern Gebhart) It identified the five Core Values, Safety/ Integrity/Respect/Service/Responsibility. Which leads to those infractions where employees were suspended would now very likely result in Discharge.

Our Local 204 Union stepped in and said the December letter was too harsh on discipline given out. Remember the 1972 Safety culture which led to employees being counterproductive? A second letter came the next year stating our "Rules to Live By" again by the Executive Safety Leadership Team. "Discipline will be in proportion to the rule violated and will be decided on a case-by-case basis".

However, violation of safety rules that put you or others at high risk of being seriously injured or killed will result in serious consequences, including termination. Examples of this type of high-risk behavior that could lead to serious injuries or death include violations related to:

- Lock Out/Tag Out
- Fall Protection From Heights
- Rubber Protective PPE
- Entering Excavations without Proper Protection

Consider these "Rules to Live By"

As stated by the Executive Safety Leadership Team in this letter: "As Alliant Energy employees, we all are expected to follow all safety rules. We cannot break high-risk safety rules and remain employees of Alliant Energy."

In 2009 the Union and the Company agreed on implementing the Blue Hat program. There was a third letter sent out to all employees stating, "We're writing to you again regarding safety. The purpose of this letter is to answer questions that have come up from many of you, both directly and raised by union leadership.

This letter included Reporting Near Misses and Injuries, Stopping Unsafe Work and Clarifying "Rules to Live By"

This letter stated in summary, it is never okay to violate safety rules. Please read, study and be sure you understand not only the four Rules to Live By, but all the safety rules and practices that are required in your work. If you have questions, contact your immediate supervisor, manager, safety representative or Blue Hat.

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Safety Culture and OSHA continued...

This is what our Safety Culture represents as to present day.

Let's get back to the Company Safety Culture. From the mid 1900's a new approach has come into play called Behavior-Based-Safety or BBS for short. Can you name some of the programs that you attended that would be considered a BBS?

- Social Skills
- Diversity
- SAFESTART
- Carl Potter – Nobody Gets Hurt
- GOTenergy – Accountability Ladder/The Mood Elevator
- New Foreman training

Now for over 25 plus years we've been trying to fix workers behaviors to avoid accidents. Since the later 2000's there has been very few significant changes to numerous variations of the BBS. So, this is where we are in a Safety Culture world, how do we keep ourselves and other safe, it starts with you.

When these letters came out, I remember a lot of us were freaking out about the content and being made an example of if we broke a Rule to Live By. The best answer I heard was from a well-respected Foreman and Union leader "What's there to worry about if you're following the Safety Rules and EOPs". I can't say much more than that to his response!

Let's look at the safety rule book, when was the last time you really had it opened and reread ALL the safety rules, sections 1-2-3. Any safety rule that says for reference see EOPXXX for more explanation.

There is a Message from the CEO, FOREWARD, Table of contents, Definitions and then Part 1 – General Safety Rules. Please take the time to read 1-1-1 through 1-1-6, I would recommend 1-1-1 a – e for starters.

- (a) Each employee is responsible for their own safety
- (b) Employees are expected to act on the side of safety to protect themselves and others at all times.
- (c) Each employee shall have access to study, understand, and follow the rules that pertain to their job duties.
- (e) IGNORANCE of these rules SHALL not be an EXCUSE for any VIOLATION.

Why am I writing about what you just read? I am being a Journeyman who felt comfortable with the safety rules, read them once or twice with very little review after that. Then I took the full time SETC position at the IPL training center, what an eye opener that was. I was held responsible for training apprentices in their job duties, safety, how to interpret safety rules and EOPs of their true intent. Ask anyone who is or was a part-time trainer and they will also say what an eye opener it is.

I have a computer folder with many of the close call/near miss articles for review. Some are a true event that wasn't under your control, wrong tool used, if I only used a rubber blanket to cover that exposed part, equipment tip overs, starting work like removing barricades from equipment before the switch clearance is completed, miss use of phasing stick ends like using the overhead probe to touch an energized elbow probe which caused a flash-over and a breaker locked out, improper cable identification, not phasing lines before closing a switch.

There was a tragic event one and a half years ago that should not have happened. Three of the Rules to Live By were violated, safety rules, EOPs and Company policies. If these workers would have taken the time to complete a Job Brief, review Job Brief when other workers came to the work site, apply LO/TO, PPE, Excavation without Proper Protection he would be with us today.

If you agree or disagree with the content of this article, whatever your classification is, bargaining, non-bargaining make sure you follow and practice these safety rules.

You are responsible for your own safety, act on the side of safety, protect others at all times.

Local 204 Steward
SETC
RJ Van Roekel



Black Hills Energy Local 204 members Ryan Schilling, Dale Brandel & Ryan Gaherty work on a large volume tap in Dubuque, IA

Local 204 Collective Bargaining Agreements

Alliant Energy Large Group contract (IES)
 Alliant Energy Small Group contract (IPC)
 Alliant Energy Distribution System Operation
 Alliant Energy Emery & Marshalltown Generating Stations
 Atlantic Municipal Utilities
 Black Hills Energy
 Cedar County Sheriffs Deputies
 CIPCO (Central Iowa Power Cooperative)
 Linn County Assistant Attorneys
 Linn County Sergeants
 Prairie Energy Cooperative
 ULCS (Utility Lines Construction Services)
 Windstream Iowa Communications



New Members

Please welcome the following members to IBEW Local 204! The following members joined Local 204 in the 2nd quarter of 2022.

Cody Henmann - Alliant
Austin Troy - Black Hills Energy
Cameron Minton - Alliant
Troy Balderas - Alliant
Travis Blakely - Alliant
Rodney McNeal - Alliant
Nathan Hinton - Alliant
Trey Swaney - Prairie Energy
Levi Bolinger - Prairie Energy
Kyle Pralle - Alliant
Troy Bochmann - Alliant
Daniel Thrasher - Alliant
Alan Horn - ULCS
Matthew Krueger - ULCS
Jeff Rassman - Windstream
Kyle Deutsch - Alliant
Jared Tolander - Alliant
David Morroquin - Alliant
Ryan DeLong - Alliant
Jeb Clark - Alliant
Hernan Hernandez - Alliant
Matthew Hauptert - Alliant
Nathan Carpenter - Alliant
Cooper Merrill - Alliant
Darwin Dede - Alliant
Jordan Holthaus - Black Hills
Daniel Messersmith - Black Hills
Douglas Velasco - Black Hills
Jon Bickford - Alliant
Joshua Huff - Alliant

Thank You, from a Local 204 retiree

New Retirements

Please join us in congratulating the following IBEW Local 204 members on their recent retirement! The following members retired in the 2nd quarter of 2022.

Jerry Korpi - ULCS

Felix Castillo - Alliant

Kent Dougherty - Alliant

Brian Boyd - Alliant

Doug Drummond - Alliant

Jeffrey Squires - Alliant

Robert Vileta - Alliant

Tim Lynn - Alliant

Kim DeWitt - ULCS

David Willamson - Black Hills Energy

Jeff Christiansen - Black Hills Energy

Scott Arndt - Alliant



I'd like to thank the Business Manager and E-Board of Local 204 for allowing me to attend the International Women's Conference in Washington DC from September 7th-10th, 2022. This conference has been going on since 1997. This year there were about 600 attendees. Several workshops were available each day. Lobbying 101, Mentoring, Getting Involved, Leadership and Women's committees in our Locals. There were three or four every day along with the entire group meeting each day.

Lonnie Stephenson (International President), Ken Cooper (International Secretary), Liz Shuler (President AFL-CIO), Jamie Raskin (Congressman Maryland), Jennifer Granholm (Department of Energy), and Stacie Abrams (candidate for GA Governor), were just a few of the speakers.

The greatest benefit of attending this conference was meeting women from all over the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada that are also IBEW. Inside wire women, line women, gas and electric utilities, telecommunications, railroad, substation, water, and many more.

I was proud to represent our Local as a retiree. I'm not sure when the last Women's Conference was attended by one of our own 204 women, but I hope this isn't the last. We have a Business Manager and team that support women workers. I feel blessed to be part of a Local so progressive.

In Solidarity,
Sue Kingsbury
IBEW since 5/7/1979



LOCAL UNION COMMUNITY CHARITIES



Did you know?



If every union member in the area donated \$1 per week to Local Union Community Charities, we could put Hundreds of Thousands of dollars back into the community. Your peers and fellow union members from across the area will determine what the greatest needs in your area are and put your dollars to work there.

With numerous ways to donate that takes no time at all, please consider donating \$1 per week or more, if possible, and make our community a better place to live for all. Collectively we can make a difference by assuring our dollars are going back into our communities where needed. [To learn more, scan the QR code or visit our website at www.luccowa.org.](#)

HOW TO DONATE



<https://www.luccowa.org/how-to-donate>

High School Trades Expo's

Local 204 Members showing students aspects of their trades



Walen Collins, Line Foreman



Electric Meter Tech, Chris Hastings



Kyle Pike, Gas Mechanic Tapper

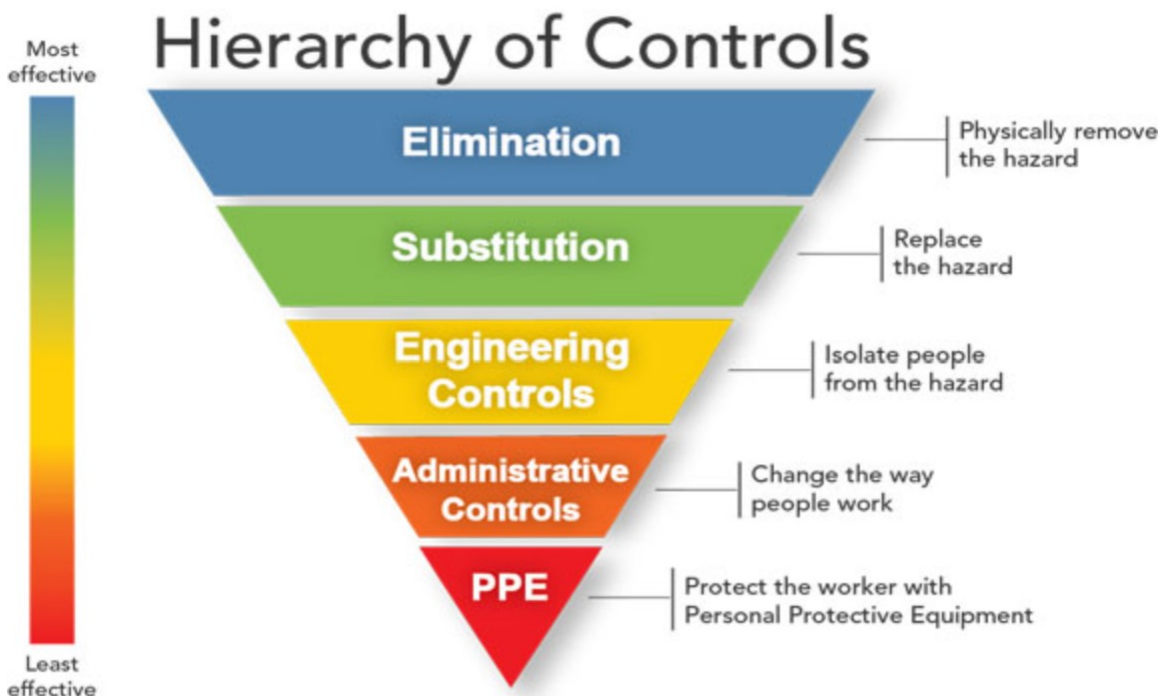


Lineman, Jeff Denz

Message from an Alliant Blue Hat

This past May, the Blue Hats got the pleasure of attending the National Safety Council and IBEW Safety Caucus in Tempe Arizona. The week was full of important safety information and impactful presentations from many great speakers. I want to talk about a few of my favorites.

Heat related illnesses were one of the presentations I liked. It's summer in the Midwest and we get plenty of heat and humidity this time of year. It's important that we recognize the signs of Heat Stroke, Heat Exhaustion, Heat Syncope (lightheadedness or dizziness), Heat Cramps, and Heat Rash. Make sure you are taking plenty of breaks, drinking plenty of water, and seeking shade when possible. The company supplies the Wilderness Athlete powder to add to water and it's packed with electro-lights. Take advantage of a shade tent while doing underground. Most importantly, we need to be able to recognize the onset of heat exhaustion or other heat related illnesses. Find the person shade, something cool to drink and relax. In severe cases, taking them to the hospital for evaluation and treatment is necessary. Any of the guys that went on the storm to New Orleans last year can attest to the importance of hydrating, shade, and plenty of breaks.



Looking at the pyramid, we can tell the most effective way of re-duce the hazard is getting rid of it completely. It is also the most difficult and expensive method. Engineering Controls is the most common method of hazard control. Some examples: isolate or control the hazard with physical barriers, machine guarding, lockout/tagout, etc. The hazard still does exist, but the engineered controls isolate the worker from the hazard. At the bottom of the pyramid, we have our PPE. This is the last line of defense in the Hierarchy of Control. It doesn't control the hazard, but it is a barrier between the hazard and the worker. PPE is only as good as the user. That is why it is important to wear it properly and inspect it often. This is also why pre-job briefs are so important. It gives everyone the chance to speak up, point out hazards that others might not have seen, and gets everyone on the same page of how the job is supposed to go. Hazard Recognition comes down to 3 main points. Hazard Identification = Do I see it? Risk Perception = Do I understand it? Risk Tolerance = Do I accept the risk? This leads to 3 additional questions. What task am I/we about to do? What are the Hazards associated with this task (how can it hurt me or others)? What are we/I going to do to eliminate those Hazards?

Blue Hat (continued)

Work-life balance was another great topic that was discussed. As a lineman, I know how important overtime is to everyone. It is one of the first questions I usually get asked when I show up to a job sight, which areas are getting to work overtime. Overtime can help us afford more of the things we want, pay our mortgage/rent, or take us on a nice vacation. Work-life balance is not the same for everyone, and it will change for us as we age. Working too long of hours too often can lead to burn out, mental fatigue, family stress, and our abilities to work safe. Yes, we are required to take a certain number of calls and be available a certain amount of time, but don't let our families take the back seat. Remember, our kids are only young once.

A Secondary Impact was a story told by the foreman of a substation crew about an accident that occurred and how it affected him. They had just parked inside the substation and as they were exiting the truck, one of the breakers faulted. It's about as unlucky of a story as you can get, but it did happen. The crew member did survive his burns, but this story is about how it affected the foreman. This accident happened back in 2010. He told how he turned to alcohol to cope, he missed months of work at a time, and even contemplated suicide. He did eventually seek counseling and things did get better for him. Ten years later, he was triggered by the sound of a fault and went back to the state he was in after the accident occurred. He told how he had to miss work again, sleepless nights, and eventually ended up talking to another counselor. Even though what happened in this story was a pure accident, it reminds us why we do the things we do at work. The importance of the pre-job briefs and understanding and following the safety rules and work practices. Saying something when you see something unsafe. Imagine spending the rest of your life living with the fact that you could have said something, but didn't, and a co-worker was severely injured or worse.

Fundraiser for one of our own

Local 204 Members stepped up in big way for a fellow brother whose family was experiencing multiple medical emergencies. Local 204 could not be more proud of the membership for their response and willingness to help their union brother in a time of difficulty. Please continue to keep the Carroll family in your thoughts and prayers.



Local 204 Members with ULCS, presenting proceeds of the fundraiser to their fellow Brother

Local 204 Structure

IBEW Local 204

Local 204 employs four full-time positions; Business Manager/ Financial Secretary, two (2) Assistant Business Managers, and an Office Administrator. All Officer and Executive Board positions are elected positions with 3-year terms. The BM/ FS appoints both Assistant Business Managers and Office Administrator. The Executive Board is comprised of 10 seats from 9 geographical areas and an additional At-Large seat. The Officers and Executive Board, along with the ABM's, attend Monthly Executive Board Meetings. (E-Board)

STAFF

Assistant Business Manager
Assistant Business Manager
Office Administrator

Sarah Faber
Adam Splinter

OFFICERS

Business Manager/Financial Sec.
President
Vice President
Recording Secretary
Treasurer

Jon Van Zante
Jeff Chapman
Pat Flannery
Adam Splinter
Shelia Altman

Gas Foreman / Alliant
Maintenance Mech. / Alliant
Lineman / ULCS
Corrosion Tech / Black Hills
Resource Coordinator / Alliant

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Unit 1 Chad Hilsabeck
Unit 2 Tyler Fredin
Unit 3 Corey Birkel
Unit 4 Josh Eaton
Unit 5 Keith Jones
Unit 6 Senica Fisher
Unit 7 Jim Hendricks
Unit 8 Gary Henry
Unit 9 Jeff Denz
At-Large Randy Brown

Gas Foreman / Alliant / Storm Lake, IA
Line Foreman / Alliant / Mason City, IA
Lineman / Alliant / Dubuque, IA
Line Foreman / ULCS / Perry, IA
Sr. Gas Trainer / Alliant / Marshalltown, IA
Line Foreman / Alliant / Cedar Rapids, IA
Operations Tech / Black Hills / Council Bluffs, IA
Line Foreman / Alliant / Centerville, IA
Lineman / Alliant / Burlington, IA
Gas Safety Blue Hat / Alliant / Lisbon, IA

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