



CANADIAN UTILITIES

**SAFETY PROGRAM**

**IBEW** 

Our seventh bi-annual Canadian Utilities Safety Program's conference took place in Toronto, on the 21st and 22nd of October, at the Toronto Airport West Hotel. It was hosted by local 636.

Attendees;

Jimmy Connor, Dave Halbauer, Paul McKnight, Gaetan Chiasson, Steve Hayes, Kevin Boyd, Dennis Kuzyk, Dan Marchant, Cal Laybourne, Leo Doran, Joseph MacDonald, Greg Davidson, Eric Lucci, Brian Manninger, Jim Millar, Tim Pitts, Tim Stratichuk, Tyler Gray, Carter Woloszyn, Jeff Self, Robert Buchanan, Doug McKay, Jim Romas, Larry Byhre, Trevor Williams, Robin George, Jeremy Shea, Bruce Harris, and Neil Collins

Brother Steve Hayes opened the meeting at 8h30 with a welcome to all and thanks to local 636 for their hospitality for hosting the meeting. We had a moment of silence for all the IBEW members who may have died or been injured since our last meeting... Brother Hayes then stated our mission statement which is "To Assist and Develop a Strong Safety Culture in IBEW". He then introduced our international vice president, Bill Daniel.

Brother Daniel talked about this week election results. The group feels that it is a good thing for the labor movement to see Harper go. We hope that bill C377 will be repealed by the new government. He also made reference to his speech of May 2014, about the importance of safety in the workplace. He warned us that even if we see long periods of no lost time incident, it may just hide the fact that there are probably a lot of near misses that could have easily been a serious incident or a fatality if the circumstances had been a little different. We also have lots of people who would do dangerous work for fear of losing their job or being reprimanded. He made a plea to all of us to report all serious accidents to the international via form 173 on the IBEW site.

It was mentioned by brother Jimmy Connor that he is part of a coalition of locals in Alberta and the firefighters are sending one or more members from each local

to funeral of one of their peer when they die due to an accident. He believe that we should do the same. Brother Daniel does agree and even if we don't send people from around the country, we should at lease have all the locals of the province represented. Brother Doug McKay had questions about form 173. Brother Daniel explained that not everyone have access to the form but each business manager of each local can designate someone from their local to have access and submit the accident reports.

Brother Brian Manninger extended a warm welcome to all the members in attendance on behalf of his business manager (each of the attendees were given a shirt and a coffee mug from Local 636 when they registered today). Then each of the delegate introduced themselves with their local number and province of origin.

Brother Gaetan Chiasson read the minutes and they were approved by the group. Brother Hayes stated that our finances were in good order and there should be money left after paying all the expenses of this meeting.

Presentation by brother Dave Halbauer on the IBEW Safety Caucus meeting in Atlanta on Sept 24th, 2015.

- Dave Mullen is the IBEW safety coordinator in Washington
- There are a lot of issues with apprentices being injured on the job and the ratio of journeyman to apprentice. It should be 2 to 1
- Problems with 4th year apprentices starting to do work on energized line before they are certify
- Problems with Pintal hitch that break
- Restrictions are starting to appear on the weight of line personal in regard to the bucket truck load rating.

More and more we are seeing problems with accident informations and pictures being circulated on social media, before family members are made aware of an accident. It is also becoming a bigger problems in companies where comments about the company or a co-worker are publish on social media. Local are dealing with a lot of discipline matters on this subject. Some utilities don't even have a protocol in place to deal with these matters.

There was a general discussion about cell phone used on the job or in vehicles. At NBPower, we used to be able to speak up to one minute on the bluetooth but

it will now be ban altogether. BC had a ban on bluetooth for years now. Some utilities still allow it. Some workers bring their cell phone with them in the bucket and it is causing distraction. On some work sites, the lead person will ask that the cell stay in the truck when working on the pole or in bucket. It is different when working alone since the person needs a way to contact others when in trouble.

Presentation by Jim Mason, from PEFCO, to improve awareness of the care, use, and maintenance of tools like; cutting tools, compression tools, their batteries, and their chargers. This is to support the safe use of tools and improve productivity and safety. He showed us a selection of different tools like; meter grabbers, shot gun stick, battery operated cable bender, load break tools, and other gadgets.

Presentation by Andy Kerr on IHSA (Infrastructure Health and Safety Association). He is a health and safety consultant on arc flash with a background in forestry and line work. He gave a brief history of ISHA rule book which was first published in 1914 and now goes by the name of Electrical Utility Safety Rules (EUSR). He described some of the rules and regulations contained in the book, and how they can be changed or amended. He also talked about the training process in place in Ontario for the PLTs and also for some other group involved with electricity like the electricians or the arborists. It is very important for all these group to have well defined processes and procedures in place for tailboards, work methods, protection standards, and work permits. The EUSR is now different than the previous edition. It is compact, weather resistant, and all defined words are in bold and italicized (after his presentation, he gave each of us a copy of the current book and a copy of the first one published in 1914).

The definitions are a real industry challenge. Authorized workers, hold-off, isolated vs isolated and de-energized, proximity, and safe limit of approach have different meanings at different utilities. IHSA is trying to have the same definition at all work place and to have all utilities using the same rule book. Andy talked about an accident where a worker was wearing FR clothing but had jean underneath and a hoodie that wasn't FR rated. These cause severe burns that could have been prevented if all of his layers of clothing would have been FR rated. He believe that cell phone are now causing epidemic problems on the road.

Adjourned for lunch

Brother Hayes put the international web site on the screen and showed us where to find form 173 for the reporting of serious accidents. We had a general discussion on what type of accidents should be reported and how different the definition of serious accident is between our many locals. The web site state that

occupational injury, illness or fatality must be reported. The business manager of each local, or a person designated by the BM, can go on the IBEW web site and fill the form 173 when required. Brother Harris will be contacting Dave Mullen at the international office to get more information on access and search capability. There is also a problem with getting timely information on accident from different utilities.

We had a short presentation by Brother Kevin Boyd on a recent accident with a motor junction box, where the door was blown away, hitting an employee causing severe injury to his arm and a mild concussion. The employee had reset an alarm, like he did many times before, but this time there was a real problem which created the arc flash that blew off the 30 pound door. Brother Boyd showed us some pictures, gave a short description of the accident, what lead to it, and some of the recommendations that came out from the investigation.

Brother McKay described an accident where a member of the public suffer severe injuries while trying to rescue two dogs near energize primary cable that was brought down two feet from the ground by a tree.

Brother Harris gave us an update on an accident that happen 3 years ago at Bluewater Power Distribution Corporation of Sarnia, Ontario, where a union member was killed in an accident. There were 6 charges against the company and 6 charges against the supervisor. The company plead guilty to one charge of "failure to make sure that employees followed safety procedures" and they got a fine of \$120,000 and a 25% surcharge on the victim's fine. The court ruling can be viewed on the internet. Just look for "ministry of labour, conviction at Bluewater"

Brother Hayes showed the video that was made after the fatality accident of Eddie Adams of Elkin North Carolina. It can be found on YouTube under Eddie Adams arc flash fatality.

We had a general discussion on different subjects. In New Brunswick, they are doing refresher training for all PLT doing hot line work. In BC, they are doing refresher training for the ones in leadership roles. Question on the role of safety advocate being reactive or proactive.

Problems with management in some utilities, coming up with new ideas or programs, that are not given to the union locals for reviews before being implemented. Problems with control rooms operators, that are now coming from the technical school instead of the rank, that don't understand the work being done by the field guys. The problem get compounded by the high number of new employees in the field and the exodus of the experienced ones. Some utilities are cutting the training for operators from 4 years to 2 years by using computer simulators and spending fewer weeks in a control room. In Manitoba, they went to 2 years of training in 2002 and because of problems, they are now trying to go

back to 4 years of training. It will take years to rectify the situation. In Ontario, the apprenticeship is still 4 years and they are sending the apprentice in the field more than ever before. This give them a better understanding of the field work and build relationship with the people in the field.

People get injured because they do things that they are not supposed to do. Most of the rules in place were written in blood and we should never forget that they are there for a good reason. Our union will be 125 years old next year. Henry Miller started it because of safety concerns and it is still very relevant today. We, as leader, must lead by example.

Brother Trevor William asked the group if safety was part of every union meetings. Some locals start every meeting with safety and stop each of them with safety.

Meeting was adjourned for the day at 4h30

We reconvene at 9h00am on October 22nd with guest speaker Bruce Lang, director of Safety, Environment & Business Continuity management (SEBCM) at Hydro Ottawa. He presentation was on the health & safety program at Hydro Ottawa. He gave us a short overview of the Ottawa's utility and their line of business. He review their policy commitment, the composition of the SEBCM group, their governance, operation, and how it all work together. He gave details on the expectations for the employees, supervisors, management, directors, and executive. He also explained the activities that they need to do to maintain a safe and healthy workplace. These activities are monitored monthly for quantity and quality. He described the sustainable OHSE management. Employees need to be engaged and we draw on their contribution to sustain the program. The company have promotional events, strong training programs, and they allow employees to report hazards anonymously. All they have to do is put the info on a card and drop it in a box.

The next guest speaker was Cindy Newell, manager of training and development at Hydro Ottawa. Her presentation was on the safe supervisor program and safety in apprenticeship. They empower their new supervisors by training them on OHS management system, employer's responsibilities, and knowledge of regulations. To empower is to "enable, give authority, give power, or authorize." Before someone start on a new job as a supervisor, they need to first have 3 months of training with the human resource department on safe supervisor program. They will get training on a variety of safety programs like accident investigations, safety field visits, running safety meetings, how to process accident reports, delivery of safety messages to employees with confidence, etc. This training program build a close relationship between the new supervisors and the safety professionals.

The program is being revised right now and will probably be delivered in pieces during the first 6 months as a new supervisor. They will also be tested when coming in their new job and will only receive the training that they required but not already have. There was a lot of questions or comments by the group after the first part of Cindy's presentation.

The second part was on safety in apprenticeship and developing the next generation of powerline maintainers. The utility will lose 44% of their PLTs in the next 10 years. So they really need to prepare now to have new PLTs available to replace them as they go. Cindy gave an overview of the program. Once someone is trained, they still have to go through 50 hours of safe training. They are using retired employees with lots of experience to train new employees. In the last year of their apprenticeship, once they reach proficiency level 4, they can go alone on-call and assess the nature of the call. There is also a few tasks that they can do alone because they have demonstrated that they are ready and able to do it. A lot of questions were generated from this presentation.

We adjourned for lunch

Brother Williams talked about the treatment of a double-amputee member by worksafe. They wanted to cut out the amount of money received by Taras Atleo to help him with his care at home. He showed us part of his 12 years old daughter plea for help. You can find the video of his daughter reading her letter with tears in her eyes on YouTube. Local 258, led by the hard work of brother McKay, started a fundraising campaign and it has now surpassed \$350,000. The group gave a standing ovation to brother McKay for his involvement, above and beyond his duties, in helping the Atleo family.

Brother Hayes talked about the exodus of almost 300 employees at the New Brunswick utilities in the past few years. It resulted in a lot of knowledge being lost and employees being put in leadership roles and being a few years without the due diligence course. There was a group discussion on the responsibilities of employees in leadership roles (not just supervisors but crew leads and others) and employees training others for their apprenticeship. How well are the other utilities doing in providing timely safety training? Some are doing well and others not so well. Some in our group don't know the answer because it is a company responsibility and they don't all share the information with the local.

Brother Connor believes that a key thing to build on safety is to have safety advocates. His utility will get 2 soon. Local 258 in BC already has 8 of them. In New Brunswick they are called Safety Champions and they have half a dozen of them.

Brother Marchant remember when the apprentices were spending 4 years with them before being certify. Now they pass some time in school, some time on simulators, and 10 weeks with them. Someone noted that we now have employees that are certify but can't do their job.

Brother Chiasson explained the Training Need Assessment (TNA) that he has to do for each of his employees. This is put on a software on the computer and everyone have access to their own TNA. A report is generated at regular time and the supervisor is responsible to make sure that the safety training of each of his employees is up to date.

Brother Halbauer mentioned that Brother Harris has been in contact with Dave Mullen from the IO and now has access to the information about accidents that are reported to the international office. He will be sharing that information with us at future meetings. He showed us on the screen what these reports look like.

Brother Eric Lucci reported that brother Tim Pitts will be getting a life saving award next month, for saving the life of one of his fellow worker in difficulty. Brother Pitts used his first aid training and also used an AED. Brother Pitts received a standing ovation from the group. Brother Lucci mentioned that not everyone is happy when they have to take these training courses over and over again. But they sure become handy when you need to help someone.

Good stuff is happening from our meetings. They now have AEDs in many TLM trucks in New Brunswick. Voltage regulators panels are now being put away from their tanks in BC. The Life Saving Rules took the form of a Safety Commitment in New Brunswick. Etc...

The draw of union stuff raised the sum of \$525. It will be given to Rob Ellis, from local 636, for is "My Safe Work" foundation

The next meeting will be in Calgary and will be hosted by local 254 on May 25th and 26th, 2016.