

# The IBEW SPARQ

A quarterly newsletter highlighting IBEW values

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## Safety at the IBEW's Core

Since the union's earliest days, one of the IBEW's top objectives has been "to promote reasonable methods of work." It's little wonder that our founders considered this a priority: In 1891, safety standards were scarce, and electrical workers were dying on the job at twice the rate of workers in other fields. Back then, when it came to safety, no one else was looking out for our safety.

Over the past 127 years, working people have made great progress, in part because unions like the IBEW have pushed for legal standards and best practices in workplace safety. We value safety so much here at the IBEW that we placed the word atop the five values of our union's Code of Excellence, ahead of *Professionalism*, *Accountability*, *Responsibility*, and *Quality*.

### WORKING SAFE IS CRUCIAL

#### In 2016:

- » **5,190 workers died on the job in the U.S.** (*U.S. Department of Labor*)
- » **905 workers died on the job in Canada** (*Assoc. of Workers' Compensation Boards*)

Hard-won safety regulations, along with technological improvements, have improved safety standards at the local, state, provincial, and federal levels. But unfortunately, enforcement too often can fall victim to political pres-



ures. Over the past year in the U.S., for example, a rule requiring employers to keep accurate records of workplace injuries was rolled back, and the number of Occupational Safety and Health Administration inspectors was slashed nearly 10 percent in 2017.

In that kind of environment, it's critical that we continue to take the initiative to make sure all our IBEW sisters and brothers go home safely at the end of the day. And there are plenty of examples where IBEW locals are taking the lead to keep members safe.

With underground line work becoming increasingly common, Chicago Local 9 members collaborated with signatory contractor Aldridge Electric to design and build a mobile, state-of-the-art trailer to safely train workers across the country.

For years, laws in almost every U.S. and Canadian jurisdiction have re-

quired motorists to slow down and move at least one lane away from emergency personnel working on roadway incidents. Thanks in part to persistent lobbying by IBEW activists—most recently, by Seattle Local 77—more than 30 states now extend the same protection to linemen and other utility workers.

That's the IBEW difference. Our members and leaders know that working safely helps prevent deaths and serious injuries on the job; and, with or without regulations, we can never afford to let down our guard. While it can be tempting to take shortcuts and skip steps, IBEW members demonstrate the Code of Excellence by following safety procedures to the letter. It's what keeps us and our union sisters and brothers safe on the job. And there's nothing more important than that.



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email [theSPARQ@ibew.org](mailto:theSPARQ@ibew.org)



## Attention, Partnerships Make Jobs Safe

IBEW camera operators and technicians are the best at what they do, and safety is crucial to maintaining that level of excellence. Fortunately, paying attention to safety is one of the most important things IBEW staff and locals do.

At CBS and Fox Sports, IBEW leaders have a joint labor-management safety committee that meets twice a year as part of their national agreements.

International representatives and business managers also meet company officials at sports remotes and television station locations to review safety procedures. Those visits often make a real difference.

Last year during the NCAA Tournament, International Representatives Neil Ambrosio and Dominick Macchia and New York Local 1212 Business Manager Ralph Avigliano raised concerns with CBS when the NCAA requested the camera operators beneath the basket sit on the floor with their legs crossed.

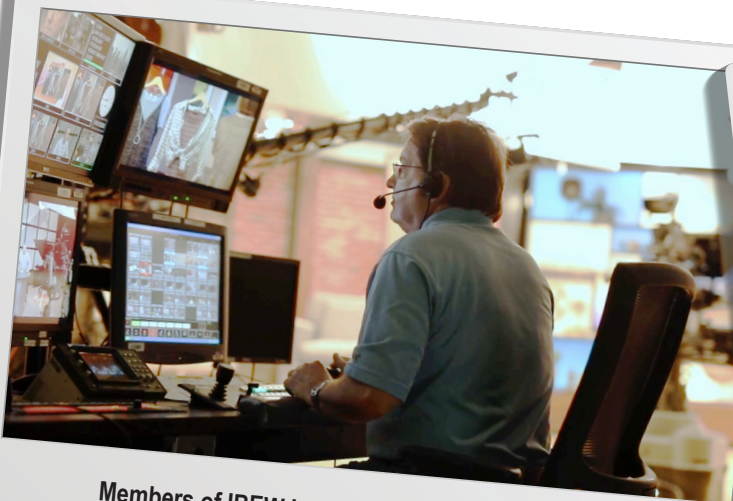
That made it difficult for them to get out of the way of charging players. IBEW representatives showed CBS officials video to support these concerns. CBS in turn convinced the NCAA to allow camera persons to sit on a rolling office chair beneath the basket, lessening the chance of a collision.



These contacts help on the local level, too. Nashville, Tenn., Local 429 is working with CBS to address the need for proper equipment to lift the high-end zone camera to the proper position at Nissan Stadium. By working together with stadium officials, they have the opportunity to find a safer solution for IBEW members.

Still, safety begins with each member. With the Code of Excellence, IBEW members know that alerting the business manager or on-site steward to any safety issues can help address the issue. When we are proactive and treat one another with respect, solutions to safety issues are achievable, and everyone goes home happy and healthy at the end of the day.

## SPARQ GOES LOCAL



Members of IBEW Local 4 in St. Louis believe the Code of Excellence is improving their jobs and local union.



IBEW Local 4 represents broadcasting professionals throughout the St. Louis region, including camera operators, news videographers and assignment editors.