

Safety

“We strive to improve safety culture throughout the workforce and in the workplace.”

*– Brett McClure, Chairman,
IBEW Local 332 Safety Committee*

Brett McClure, a member of IBEW Local 332, is chair of the IBEW Local 332 Safety Committee. He frequently writes safety articles, as well as articles on other topics, for the IBEW Local 332 newsletter. We asked Brett to provide the safety articles for this issue.

Brett has worked for Cupertino Electric, Inc., since 1992, and has been an IBEW member since 1988. He was placed in a foreman's position and as a General Foreman, has managed electrical construction projects since 1999.

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- 2. *Proper Use of PPE*
- 3. *Stress And Distraction*
- 4. *Successful Safety Meetings*
- 5. *Mental Health During Stressful Times*
- 6. *Safety Corner – PCD Audio & Video System Integration*
- 8. *Your Retirement Information: Available To You 24 Hours a Day*



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I'm Wearing My PPE. What Could Go Wrong?

By Brett McClure, Chairman IBEW Local 332 Safety Committee

Just about everyone on a construction site knows the basic PPE (personal Protective Equipment) required to complete common tasks and to just be allowed within the boundaries of the work area.

Basics would include hard hat, safety glasses, vest, work boots and many contractors require gloves as well. In addition to the basic items, there is a vast array of PPE for specific tasks that exceed the minimum.

If the PPE is not used properly or is mistakenly chosen for the task, results may range from minor to catastrophic. It is also possible for workers to somehow gain a false sense of security by using PPE to mitigate the hazard. PPE does not make anyone invincible.

Common PPE failures include:

- Improper choice or fit of a respirator which may allow for respiratory contamination or even compromised breathing ability
- Not using a face shield when necessary, which may result in a first aid eye injury or loss of vision, teeth, or worse.
- Improper choice and fit of fall arrest equipment. If this is actually required in a fall situation, it may result in serious injury or death if the lanyard is too long, allowing the victim to strike an object or become impaled. An improperly sized or improperly fastened fall arrest harness may create an injury or death hazard as much as the fall itself.
- Improper level and component choice of arc flash PPE may allow for unprotected body parts or an overall lack of protection resulting in burns, hearing loss, vision loss or death.

Proper selection and use of PPE is a fundamental part of protecting the worker and providing a safe work environment. We should care for the equipment to ensure that it's in good working order and take it out of service when it is non-compliant. We should work as a team to remind supervisors when basic PPE consumables like earplugs are running low.

Supervisors should look ahead to tasks that require specialized PPE so there is ample time to procure equipment and provide training as needed. As safety professionals we all must exhibit the knowledge and awareness to choose and implement proper PPE.



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Stress and Distraction

By Brett McClure, Chairman IBEW Local 332 Safety Committee

One safety factor that is often overlooked is the human condition. Don't let distraction due to stress be the cause of an accident. Stress and fatigue are critical conditions that can create distraction and lead to an unfortunate accident. It's preventable, similar to how we already use proper procedures and PPE to successfully avoid accidents.

At work, the danger from stress and distraction can be extreme. Stress can come from negative influences, such as a severe illness or death of a loved one, financial hardship, added responsibility or difficulty at work, or going through a divorce. Stress also has negative health effects and may lead to alcohol and drug abuse.

Stress can also come from a positive life experience like buying a home, traveling, or sending a child off to school.

In the construction industry there is no program in place to identify or mitigate hazards created by individuals distracted by stress. But even without a written program, there are solutions to mitigating the hazards associated with stressed workers on the construction site. Here are a few things supervisors can do:

- Be aware of your crews; look and listen for signs of a worker under stress
- Assist with sensible solutions based upon the magnitude and duration of the stress issue
- Reassign the stressed individual to a simpler task for a time period that makes sense or to a safer location on the job, away from the heavy equipment operation or fall hazard

- Offer time off
- Ask the individual for a suggestion and encourage them to reach out if needed to their healthcare provider.

Workers need to feel comfortable enough to reach out to the supervisor to communicate their concerns about their own ability to perform their task at the highest level without feeling threatened. Workers need to take responsibility to act on stress reduction or management and realize that depending on the level of distraction created by their stressed condition, they are creating a greater hazard for themselves and others in the workplace.

For stressors that are within our control to change, we should focus on solutions and implement those solutions as quickly and effectively as possible.

- Get enough rest
- Maintain a regular sleep schedule
- Exercise daily if possible—whether it's working out, engaging in a sport, or just taking a nice walk.
- Follow a healthy diet as much as possible.
- Avoid junk food as a routine
- Engage in an activity that works your mind doing something that you enjoy, whether it's creating art, cooking a special meal, or rebuilding an engine.
- If your stress feels overwhelming, reach out to a friend, family member, or your healthcare professional.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADOBE

How to Have a Successful Safety Meeting

By Brett McClure, Chairman IBEW Local 332 Safety Committee

Everyone on the job site is required to attend the site safety meeting, whether it occurs daily or weekly, and whether it occurs with all trade members of the entire jobsite or just with their specific company. Attendance only places you at the meeting; it's the engagement with the meeting that truly makes the difference in the safety of the individual and their co-workers.

Key to this effort is the presentation of the Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), also sometimes called the Project Risk Assessment (PRA), or Safety Pre-task Plan (SPTP). The Job Hazard Analysis communicates the details of the project tasks, the hazards associated with those tasks, and how to mitigate those hazards. Mitigation can be done through the use of administrative controls, engineering or additional PPE.

The presentation of the JHA is key, not only to properly communicate the material to the crew members, but to elevate the level of engagement. A meeting with content that is unclear will leave most attendees lacking necessary details or sometimes doesn't even pertain to any tasks that may

occur on the job site.

The content of the presentation should pertain to topics that are current to the job and that affect everyone on the project. There should be time for discussion and an opportunity for attendees to bring issues to the meeting.

The individual conducting the meeting should speak loudly and clearly. That person should make sure that they have everyone's attention. Whoever runs the meeting should engage the group by asking for suggestions regarding site specifics, such as calling out specific tasks or areas of the project that require an extra focus on safety.

Safety culture requires effort to maintain engagement by everyone, from the supervisor to the crew. The supervisor should act on suggestions from the crew to show that their contribution matters and the crew should engage in the process with the same pride that they put toward their installation work.

The results should be a collective group of like-minded safety professionals that work together to create a workplace free from hazards so everyone can perform their work and get home safety every day.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ADOBE

Mental Health During Stressful Times

By Brett McClure, Chairman IBEW Local 332 Safety Committee

Everyone is well aware of the COVID-19 pandemic that is upon us. Many of us are also aware of the stress that it has introduced into our lives. On varying levels, we are faced with isolation, concern for the health of ourselves and our family, employment and financial stability, compliance measures, frightening statistics, global economic stability, and just the general stress that comes with change as we are forced quickly into what feels like a different world altogether. Adding to the stress of a global pandemic, society has recently been shocked by events that have reopened the wounds of racial inequality, with highly emotional results. The world is indeed in a state of stress and confusion. At times, it can feel like an overheated pressure cooker ready to explode. Some of this pressure can be overwhelming at times, even to those that seem unshakable.

Mental health is often overlooked by “healthy” people since, on the surface, it doesn’t seem to be critical to survival like the physical condition of our bodies, but this oversight neglects to consider the fact that without a sound mind the body will suffer physical breakdown. Similar to the condition of our bodies, our minds can display symptoms when not functioning properly. Some common symptoms may include insomnia, irritability, headache, digestive problems, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and conditional

anxiety or depression. More serious symptoms may include severe anxiety, uncontrolled anger, panic attacks, severe depression and thoughts of suicide. Identifying the symptoms can sometimes be obvious, but can also be easily neglected and go untreated. Symptoms could be the result of a short-term condition, the lasting effects of a traumatic event, or a buildup of developed influences over time. Depending on the condition, self-help may be adequate, but in moderate or severe cases professional help is likely needed. We would not attempt to perform surgery on ourselves or set our own broken bone. Similarly, we should seek professional help when needed to heal our minds.

Whether you are on the self-funded or Kaiser health plan, there are resources available that are covered by the plan for you and your family. If you are just in a challenging period due to current circumstances, reach out to a friend, family member, or healthcare professional for support. You can also call your doctor and ask them for guidance. If you become desperate in a more challenging circumstance, please immediately reach out for help, even if that means calling a hotline, and please remember that every circumstance is temporary. You are not alone with your feelings. There are people that care. With honesty and compassion, we can all help each other, as we would our own family. The late Bill Withers said it appropriately - “Lean on Me...”

PCD Audio & Video System Integration Puts Safety First... Training With A Consistent Safety Message



PHOTO COURTESY OF PCD

Bill Graham

Safety Director, Director of Operations
PCD Audio & Video System Integration

We spoke with Bill Graham, Safety Director at PCD Audio & Video System Integration, to discuss the various components of their safety program and how it is administered.

Q: What is your official title at PCD Audio & Video System Integration and how long have you worked there?

A: I am the Safety Director and Director of Operations and have been with the company for 5 years.

Q: Please describe the various components of your safety program and how it is administered?

A: Our big push is staying engaged with safety throughout a worker's entire employment at PCD. We have a number of components to our safety program. These include the Initial New Hire Safety Checklist; the IIPP (Injury and Illness Prevention Program) Safety Program; Weekly Toolbox talks; discussion of a safety topic at every Company meeting; a Heat Exhaustion Prevention Plan; the PCD Hydration Policy (including bottled water being dispatched to the vans); an Employee Safety Information Form; and Vehicle Safety through a GPS system and Cell Control, a device that prevents cell phone use except to answer an incoming call on a hands free device.

After reviewing the New Hire Checklist, our employees become part of a comprehensive, ongoing safety learning environment where they are receiving information on IIPP, taking ClickSafety courses, and becoming part of our weekly Toolbox Talks. All of these things are followed up on constantly.

Q: What is the initial safety training the PCD employees go through?

A: The first component of the safety program we share with employees is the New Hire Safety Checklist. This checklist includes all the basics—PPE, electrocution hazards, using power tools,

materials handling, fall hazards, etc.

Q: How would you describe your process for implementing the safety program?

A: Our cornerstones for implementing the safety program include the New Hire Safety Package as well as scheduled Weekly Meetings, and the Posted IIPP Safety Program. We get a lot of mileage out of the weekly Toolbox Talks, which are essentially roundtable discussions on the jobsite. We also implement thorough hands-on training and posted IIPP information.

Q: How would you describe PCD's safety philosophy?

A: Safety is our NUMBER 1 priority. Coming in under budget is our second priority. If your company is strong and profitable, that's great. We don't believe that can happen if you're not looking out for the safety of your workers.

Q: How is employee participation in the safety program encouraged, implemented and reinforced?

A: We discuss safety at each of our scheduled weekly meetings as well as at every company meeting. Our weekly Toolbox Talks are solely focused on a specific safety issue. We have quarterly company-wide meetings on safety. We reinforce our safety message by holding everyone accountable for the information given and the procedures implemented.

Q: How has your program grown or changed over the past few years? What's new?

A: Safety has always been embedded into the culture of PCD. I would say in the past 5 years the structure I helped provide, coupled with PCD promoting around-

the-clock access to safety training is what moved the needle. Ultimately, that has all resulted in a drop in our ExMod number.

Q: What kind of administrative structure has PCD put in place to support the safety program?

A: A lot of the follow up on our safety implementation is technology-driven. Collaborative software like Smartsheets keeps everyone up-to-date on meeting topics. If someone speeds while driving a company vehicle, we get an alert in real-time. As a result, hardly anyone speeds anymore with our vehicles.

Q: Does PCD having ongoing training opportunities for safety at a management level?

A: We have various safety topics that we discuss on an ongoing basis with our management. Our safety philosophy with management is ongoing; it's supported by information accessibility and everyone is held accountable through rigorous follow-up.

Q: How do your customers view safety and do they see the value?

A: Our customers are all very safety conscious. It's very important to them, as it is to us. We also work closely with the General and Electrical Contractors on the job site. They often see us having our safety meetings. It sends a strong signal that we take safety seriously and respect the job site as a whole.

Q: If you had to use one sentence to sum up safety training at PCD, what would that be?

A: PCD's safety program trains by using a consistent safety message, delivered seriously and followed up diligently.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PCD

At the Jewish Home & Senior Living Foundation, as with all jobs during COVID-19, PCD's workers continuously wash their hands and wear masks in addition to standard Personal Protective Equipment for the job.

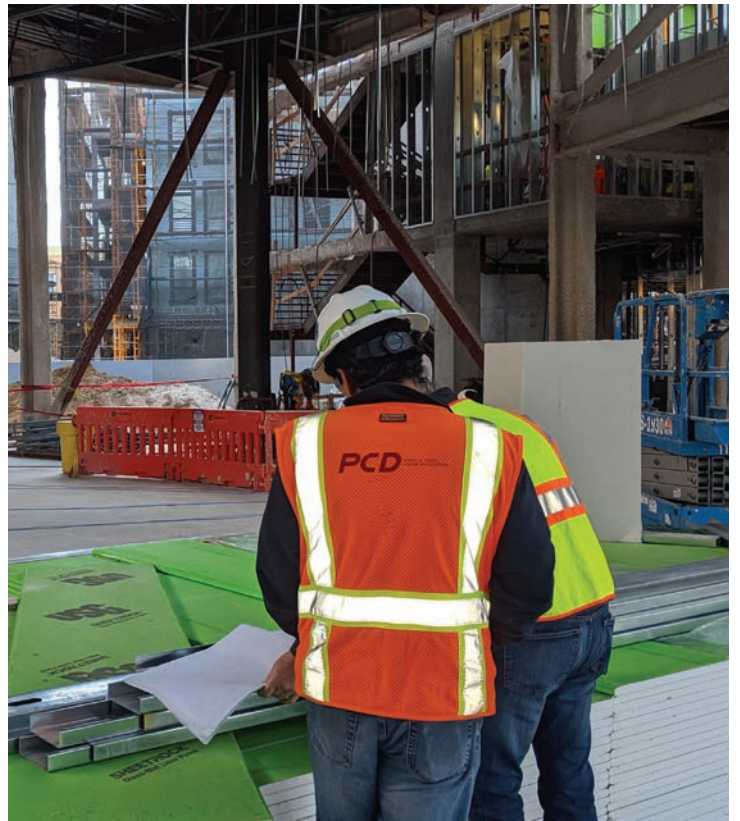


PHOTO COURTESY OF PCD

Every subcontractor onsite at the Jewish Home & Senior Living Foundation is trained to follow the same safety standards as PCD installers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF PCD

The safe use of ladders is an example of a topic that would be discussed during PCD's weekly safety "Toolbox Talks".



PHOTO COURTESY OF PCD

Safety is the number one priority for PCD installers (seen here at the Cache Creek Casino Resort).

Your Health And Welfare Trust Fund Important Phone Numbers

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Plan Administrator - United Administrative Services
408.288.4400
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Questions about claim payment, claim forms and benefit info:
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To locate a participating preferred provider dentist:
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- Call 1-800-547-7754
- Press "0" to speak to a retirement specialist. Have your Social Security Number ready
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