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Sound and Communication VDV Exam Prep class.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JATC

The requirement to become VDV certified through the State of California took effect on Jan. 1, 2009.

This date was not extended. NorCal Sound and Communication JATC continues offering VDV Exam Prep practice

classes for installer/technician certification, as well as opportunities to take a practice certification test online.

The VDV Exam Prep class covers key facets within the VDV industry. The prep class includes a lecture/discussion

on topics including: safety, Ohm's Law, voice/data, fiber optics, security, access, CCTV, and audio visual systems. The course will also provide students with a handout to study, as well as a comprehensive practice test that allows the instructor to discuss the sample questions and explain the correct answers.

To date, NorCal S&C has conducted 35 VDV Prep classes (892 members signed up to participate) throughout the region.

For more information about the Exam Certification Preparation class, and taking the practice test online, contact NorCal S&C JATC by calling (408) 453-3101.



A publication of the National Electrical Contractors Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers of Northern California.



JATC Apprentice from Local 617 focusing in his AC Theory course.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JATC

Vince Cosentino Leaves JATC Legacy



Vince surrounded by the work he loved and now leaves behind for the next generation.

Photo courtesy of Vince Cosentino.

When it comes to JATC training, Vince Cosentino literally wrote the book—and invented a few new chapters.

And even though he retired last year as the NORCAL Sound and Communications Training Director, the program Vince initiated is bigger and better than ever, and is widely regarded as a national model.

Today, thanks in large part to Vince's efforts, the NORCAL Sound and Communications training program enrolls over 350 students, offers a day school with a vibrant new curriculum, and recruits throughout the region. Over 1,000 installer/technicians have been trained since those first days in 1992, when Vince took over the fledgling training effort.

In the early days, Vince researched and developed his own four-year curriculum, and created a database to track class hours and on-the-job training hours for apprentices. He then began guiding and mentoring all of the electrical locals on how to start and maintain Sound and Communication apprenticeship training programs. He set up a central administrative office and hired instructors.

While Vince was developing the NORCAL program, the telecommunications marketplace broke wide open. In 1999, The International Presidents of NECA and IBEW sent messages advising Locals to pay attention to the Sound and Communications/Telecommunications marketplace. It quickly became apparent that Sound and Communications was a strong growth area.

In order to capitalize on the growth, The National Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee developed a three-year curriculum for telecommunications, and Vince quickly adapted the new curriculum to the Northern California Sound and Communications program. Other Vince innovations followed, including the sponsorship of the first BICSI training on the West Coast.

In 2004, Vince began to plan the transition from night school in the local electrical centers to day school under the direct control of NORCAL Sound and Communications JATC trustees and the training staff. Vince established day school training in 2005, using the newly released NORCAL JATC curriculum. He added fiber optics classes to the training center locations and continuing education

classes for technicians and senior technicians.

As the school grew, so did the quality of the instruction, with over 42,000 hours of related supplemental instruction offered in 2007. In recent years, IBEW/NECA electrical/sound and communications contractors contributed \$1.5 million annually to the program, with 75% of the income spent directly on training.

"VDV is a highly technical field, with technology changing every day," said Vince. "Only a thorough and comprehensive training program such as ours prepares installers to understand technology and keep up with advancements."

Vince graduated from San Jose City College with an A.A. degree in Electronics and a minor in Business. Over the next three decades, he worked as a field technician, and then founded his own electrical contracting firm. After selling the company, Vince became the NORCAL Regional Training Director.

IBEW/NECA salutes Vince for his pioneering contributions to our industry and our training program.

In the Works at NorCal Sound and Communications JATC

NorCal Sound and Communication JATC is working with Foothill College to provide a more extensive continuing education curriculum for installer/technicians, as well as an associate degree option for apprentices.

Installer/technicians who complete continuing education upgrade classes through NorCal S&C will soon be able to receive Continuing Education Units (CEU's) through Foothill College. Some of the proposed class topics will include structured cabling, security systems, fiber optics, and blueprint reading. Below is a list of the installer/ technician upgrade classes under consideration, including the CEU's as well as the duration in hours anticipated for each course.

NorCal S&C JATC is also exploring a joint program with Foothill College that would grant apprentices the opportunity to use credits they acquire through the apprenticeship program toward an A.A. or A.S. degree. Under this option, apprentices could also take supplementary general education courses approved by Foothill College in order to receive their degree.

For more information about the prospective program with Foothill College, contact NorCal S&C JATC by calling (408) 453-3101.



2nd year S&C JATC apprentices work together on fire alarm systems.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JATC



2nd year S&C JATC apprentices work together on fire alarm systems.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JATC

Continuing Education Curriculum for Technicians

Course Title	Units	Hours
CPR/First Aid	1	8
OSHA 10	1	12
Structured Cabling	2	40
Fiber Optic & Blueprint Reading	2	40
Codes & Practices	2	40
DC Theory	2	40
AC Theory	2	40
Fire Alarm Systems	2	40
Security Systems	2	40
Telephony-Paging Systems	2	40
Residential & Commercial A/V	2	40
Semiconductors & Nurse Call	2	40
CCTV	2	40
Broadband & Clock Systems	2	40
Fire Life Safety Exam Prep	1	6
CFOT	1.5	18
VDV Exam Prep	1	6



**Cindy Brady, Safety
Director at Collins
Electrical Company in
Sacramento, CA**

At Collins Electrical Company, Safety Takes On the Personal Touch

We recently spoke with Cindy Brady, Safety Director at Collins Electrical Company, to discuss their safety program.

Q: How would you define the safety culture within your company?

A: I would say at this point it's excellent. I've been here almost 11 years and it's taken me awhile to develop it, but it's an effective program. Every year we look at our program and make changes to it to keep up with the current requirements.

Q: How do you think your employees feel about safety and do they see the value in practicing safety?

A: Many of them originally just lacked proper training. We've really been hammering away on that. We do on-the-job training and we keep a training log of all of the employees. Each manager at every one of our five branches knows where their people are in the training process. We do quite a bit of training, and we've incorporated NFPA 70e training.

Q: Explain NFPA 70E training.

A: It's the Energized Electrical Safe Work Practices through the National Fire Protection Association. It's a standard which is most likely going to be adopted by OSHA. It outlines safe work practices when performing electrical energized. The employees buy into the program more when they're directly involved. We do ladder training, fork lift, scissor lift, and scaffold, etc. Anytime we come across something, we stop and we actually do training and they receive a card. It is helpful because they know what we expect from them. Employees don't intentionally want to get hurt and it's actually reduced our injuries quite a bit. We were averaging 25-30 injuries a year and we're now down to around ten.

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

A: We're actually evaluated by the general contractors on our safety record. We have to do extensive safety pre-qualifications. As part of the process, we have to provide them with our incident rates for the past three years. It's not about the lowest bid anymore. Safety is a big part.

Q: How is safety implemented or reinforced with your employees?

A: We do on-the-job site training. The foreman will stop the employees and retrain them if they see them doing something incorrectly. I do field walks, as does my assistant, Joe Murillo. We don't just hammer on the things that are wrong; we also look at the procedures they're doing really well. The personal touch is important. When employees see us in the field, they know we practice what we preach; it's very helpful. We encourage them to ask questions. So I think that's been a really big benefit to our company.

Q: Do you have any kind of training to keep your employees up-to-date on new standards or procedures?

A: Yes, we incorporate the new standards into our safety program and provide update training. A lot more of our employees attend the OSHA 10 classes than ever before. I think it's really making a huge difference in our company.

For more information on the Collins Electrical Company, Inc. safety program, contact Cindy Brady at cbrady@collinselectric.com or by calling (916) 567-1100.

Safety is First at Gill's Electric Co., Inc./Alpha Electronic Systems



**Brad Gill, Owner of
Gill's Electric Co., Inc.
/Alpha Electronic
Systems in Oakland, CA**

Brad Gill is the CEO and President of Gill's Electric Co. Inc./Alpha Electronic Systems. He recently shared his thoughts about safety with us.

Q: How would you define the safety culture within your company?

A: Safety is first. We push that to all of our employees 24/7.

Q: How do you and your employees feel about safety and do you think they see the value?

A: Absolutely. I'll give you a good example. We have our classroom right here in the building and the safety meetings are voluntary. They do not get paid to attend these meetings. We get near 100% attendance every month and have for the last 10-12 years.

Q: How do you believe your customers feel about safety?

A: Well, that depends on the customer—it's very important to some, and to others it's a secondary concern.

Q: How is safety reinforced within your company?

A: We have raffle prizes after our monthly meetings in the classroom, as well as our weekly tailgate meetings. We have a safety rewards program. If you haven't had an injury for the year, you're rewarded monetarily for that. I dare say that we very rarely have any injuries of any kind.

Q: Are there any other safety trainings that your employees have to go through to get updated on new safety procedures?

A: From time to time, certain projects require specific training and certification. For these reasons, we offer our project managers and crews a wide variety of training subjects to choose from on an ongoing basis. There are also safety classes available through NorCal NECA and the Electrical Contractor's Trust of Alameda County, including CPR and AED training certifications.

For more information on Gill's Electric Co. Inc./Alpha Electronic Systems' safety program, contact Brad Gill at brad@gillselectric.com or by calling (510) 536-4455.

IBEW Sound & Communications Health & Welfare Trust

What Will Change For 2009?

For the eighth year in a row, the costs of medical care and prescription drugs have increased at double-digit percentages across the nation. Each year the Board of Trustees, with the assistance of their professional advisors, must find ways to keep health care and prescription drug coverage's as affordable as possible in the face of these rising costs.

To ensure that the Health and Welfare Trust Plan is adequately funded to pay medical benefits for 2009, the following benefit changes will occur effective January 1, 2009:

Kaiser, Health Net and PacifiCare HMO Plans

Co-payment Changes

1. The inpatient and outpatient hospital co-pay will increase from \$0 to \$100 per admission for inpatient hospital and per procedure for outpatient procedures.
2. The emergency room co-pay will increase from \$50 for Kaiser and PacifiCare and \$35 for Health Net to \$100. The co-pay will be waived if you are admitted to the hospital as an inpatient.

Self-Funded Medical Plan

Prescription Drug Program Changes

The prescription drug benefit administered by RESTAT has added two new programs that apply to prescriptions on or after January 1, 2009:

1. Step Therapy Program

This program requires the use of less expensive generic drugs or brand equivalent drugs before allowing the use of a more expensive non-preferred drug within selected drug classes. Drug classes and medical conditions in this program include: GI/Ulcer Proton Pump Inhibitors, antihistamines, antidepressants, hypertension, cholesterol, and asthma. This program ensures that you receive the clinically appropriate, most cost-effective medication based upon your prescription history.

2. Specialty Pharmacy Program

This program provides clinical management and distribution services for specialty medications for individuals living with chronic illness.

Participants and providers must order specialty medications exclusively through the Specialty Pharmacy Program administered by RESTAT.

What are specialty medications?

Specialty medications are primarily available as injectable drugs, infusions, and inhalants. They usually require special handling, such as temperature-controlled packaging, individual dosing or express delivery. These drugs are also typically administered in a physician's office, through home infusion therapy, or in-home health agency and infusion suites.



Photo courtesy of iStockphoto.com

How to Download and Use the VDV Logo

The VDV brand is now available for use on your marketing and communications materials. Visit www.norcalvdv.org and click on "The VDV Brand" to download the logo. Your use of the VDV brand will help it grow in recognition and identify you as a qualified member of the Sound and Communications industry.

Your Trust Fund Important Phone Numbers

Questions about eligibility for coverage, premiums, reserve accounts, and info booklets, call:

United Administrative Services
408-288-4400
Toll-Free 800-748-6417

Trust Self-Funded Medical Plan Trust Dental Plan

Questions about claim payment, claim forms and benefit info:
408-288-4481
Toll-Free 800-541-8059

Anthem Blue Cross PPO

www.anthem.com.ca
To locate a participating preferred provider physician, clinic, or hospital:
408-288-4452 or 800-541-8059
Refer to Group # 170016M001

Interplan/Dentlinox Dental PPO

www.interplancorp.com
To locate a participating preferred provider dentist:
Toll-Free 800-444-4036

Kaiser Permanente

www.kaiserpermanente.org
Questions about benefit info and ID Cards:
Toll-Free 800-464-4000
Refer to Group # 919

Health Net www.health.net

Questions about benefit info and ID Cards:
Toll-Free 800-522-0088
Refer to Group # 57845A

PacificCare

www.pacificcare.com
Questions about benefit info and ID Cards:
Toll-Free 800-624-8822
Refer to Group # 402457

PacificCare Behavioral Health

www.unitedbehavioralhealth.com
Questions about mental health benefits or the member assistance program: 800-888-2998
Group # 10000824-0001, 0002

Vision Service Plan

www.vsp.com
Questions about vision benefits and vision claims or to request a Vision Plan Provider Directory:
Toll-Free 800-877-7195

*To order additional copies
of The Data contact
Lauren@ahcommunications.com*

New Website for IBEW Health and Welfare Trust

The Health and Welfare Trust for IBEW Sound and Communications has a brand new website that can be found at <http://www.uastpa.com>. The new site can be used to obtain useful tools and information on benefit plans.

- All members were sent a PIN that can be used to access eligibility.

After logging in, you can check details such as:

- Dependents on your plan
- Medical plan selected
- Your address
- Date of birth
- The last three months of hours reported
- Find out if hours were reported
- Availability of coverage per month
- Resources on management of benefit plans

*If you've lost your pin or
have questions about your
benefits plan, contact
Sandy Stephenson at
sstephenson@uastpa.com
or by calling
(408) 288-4440.*



How Can You Help Yourself And The Trust Save Money?

Participants can help themselves and the Health and Welfare Trust to save money by making educated and cost-effective health care choices, including:

Anthem Blue Cross Preferred Provider Organization

Utilizing the Anthem Blue Cross Preferred Provider Organization (P.P.O.) network of physicians, clinics and hospitals and the Interplan/Dentlinox Dental, P.P.O. network of dentists. (The member's out-of-pocket expense is less and the Health and Welfare Trust receives large discounts versus "retail" costs of services.)

Generic Drugs

Utilizing a generic drug as an alternative to a brand name drug. They are more cost effective.

norcalvdv.org



SOUND AND
COMMUNICATIONS
of Northern California