



Professional Knowledge Can Provide a Safer Workplace

By Kent Jorgensen,
Chairman, IATSE Safety Committee

There are many things that make any workplace safer. Previous articles have talked about the importance of a safe attitude and the responsibility of employers to provide a safe workplace. Workplace injuries and illnesses cause heartache and pain, and they cost both the worker and the business money. In my perfect world (if I were the King of Show Business), bosses and employees would work together to prevent all on-the-job injuries and illnesses.

But, we all know this is not always possible.

As a worker in “this” world, ultimately you have to do what you can to protect yourself. This means education of how to do the tasks you are asked to perform on the job. I believe that a well trained worker with a safe attitude can have a career free of any serious job-related injury or illness. As a professional you should seek out training and information to be better at your job. Utilize the resource of your Union.

HOW DO YOU EDUCATE YOURSELF?

Hopefully you have an employer who sees the value in a well trained workforce. The workers will affect the bottom line by being more productive and saving on the cost of accidents. Attend and pay attention to the training offered. Locals and employers sometimes come together in helping to provide these classes.

If there is no formal training provided by the company, ask one of the old guys. Many people who have done a job for a long time are thrilled to show new people how to do it. Sometimes their ideas seem old fashioned, but open your mind; their years of experience have value. Yeah, they may move a little slower, but they often know the shortcuts to get the job finished fast. My Dad (an old guy) always told me, “Work smarter not harder”.

Does your Local offer any kind of training or information sharing? Many Locals have some kind of classes avail-



able to members. In larger cities, locals share training with each other. There is information in newsletters and on Web sites. Local vendors will sometimes have classes they will invite people to.

There are classes available at some colleges and trade schools. Industry trade shows sometimes offer classes. Traveling seminars are also available for people interested in improving their skills.

The International and many IATSE locals are involved with the Entertainment Services and Technology Association (ESTA). The ESTA Foundation is an organization working on creating and supporting education in the entertainment industry. The Foundation puts on seminars and training all over the country, and it is working on Web-based publishing of information available to the industry.

Collecting books, catalogues, Web sites, and any other source of information is important to any working professional. Talk to people you meet at work and ask them what things helped them the most in learning their job. Build up a professional library, and look at it once in awhile.

Co-workers and employers may look out for you, but no one looks out for you like you do. When it comes down to it, the better you are at your job the safer you will be. Take some time to learn.

