

ESOURCE NEWSLETTER

Turning Safety Meetings Into Life-Saving Conversations

Most safety meetings start the same way: a supervisor with a clipboard, a crew half-listening, and everyone quietly counting the minutes until they can get back to work.

It's not that people don't care about safety — they do. They just don't want to sit through another speech about gloves or ladders that feels miles away from the real pressures of the job.

Yet, incidents keep rising. The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reported a double-digit increase in workplace accidents across industrial and coatings operations last year, even as training hours climb. That gap tells the real story: It's not that workers don't *know* the rules, it's that culture keeps rewriting them.

Deadlines, production pressures, and an aging workforce create an undercurrent that most safety programs don't address. Crews end up choosing between doing things right and doing them fast, and the unspoken rule becomes, "We don't really do it that way here."

Toolbox talks are where that mindset can change. Done right, they're not compliance briefings; they're culture builders. And that's where the Six Gears of Grategy, a step-by-step model for culture transformation, comes in.



Here are practical ways to make those 10 minutes before the shift feel like time well spent as opposed to time lost.

Attitude — The Tone You Set Is the Culture You Create

Every safety huddle starts long before anyone says a word. Crews read body language faster than they absorb bullet points. If a leader walks in distracted or defensive, the message dies before it begins.

Attitude determines whether a safety talk feels like a scolding or an act of care. Skip the lecture: Start with a story, something real, even something that went wrong: "Yesterday, Maria caught a leak before it became a job-stopper. That's why we pause." It reframes safety as pride rather than punishment.

Research from the National Safety Council (NSC) shows that field technicians who believe supervisors value their well-being are five times less likely to experience a recordable injury. The numbers back what common sense already knew: When people feel respected, they take safety personally.

Appreciation — The Practice of Seeing What's Right

Appreciation isn't about handing out compliments. It's about training your mind to notice what's working instead of what's broken. Safety leaders who make that mental shift start spotting opportunities for prevention rather than just problems to be solved.

On a busy jobsite, it's easy to fixate on the misses: Someone forgot personal protective equipment (PPE), skipped a step, and came close to a near-miss. But when you intentionally look for what went right, you start to see patterns worth repeating: the crew that checked each other's harnesses. The operator who shut down the equipment instead of rushing. The quiet habits that keep everyone whole.

This gear isn't loud or public. It's the daily practice of gratitude that changes how you lead and how you listen. When a leader genuinely values those small wins, it changes how people show up. They feel seen, not inspected, and that's where real safety begins.

Access — Let the Crew Do the Talking

Toolbox talks fall flat when information only flows one way. The people holding the sprayers, grinding the rust, or walking the scaffolds know exactly where the risks hide.



Open the floor. Ask, "What's one close call we had this week?" or "Where are we most at risk today?" Rotating who leads the talk keeps voices fresh and lets veterans pass wisdom to the next generation. That's critical, given that 23 percent of corrosion-control professionals are set to retire within five years.

This is where psychological safety matters most. When workers feel safe enough to speak up, they stop accidents before they happen. Without that trust, silence becomes the most dangerous sound on a jobsite.

Applause — Make the Invisible Visible

Appreciation happens inside you; applause happens in public. It's where private gratitude turns into shared pride. Culture solidifies when progress is visible. People repeat what gets noticed. Some crews track safe days on a whiteboard. Others hand out small recognition cards when someone models safe behavior.

A company I visited turned it into a weekly ritual. Each Friday, they named one “Safety Rock Star” based on peer nominations. The winner got a green hard-hat sticker and bragging rights until the next round. It wasn’t flashy, but it worked.

That visibility fuels pride. Pride fuels consistency. And consistency — not compliance — is what keeps people safe.

FEATURED SPEAKERS: 2026 IMEA ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING & VENDOR EXPO



Otto W. Buzz Krohn
Executive Partner
O. W. Krohn &
Associates, LLP

Session Topics

- Overview of Municipal Electric Utility Financial & Reporting Requirements – BEST PRACTICES
- Financial Statement Analysis & Interpretation – BEST PRACTICES
- Fair, Just & Non-Discriminatory Electric Rates & Charges – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
- Past & Present Regulatory Requirements & Environment
- Current Issues Facing the Electric Industry – Keeping Pace with AI Data Centers



Laura Lee Hites
Keynote Speaker

Session Topics

- Leadership
- Accountability & Ethics



Gary Grubbs,
EUDS Consulting

Session Topic

- Pole Attachment Agreements

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2026 IMEA Annual Business Meeting & Vendor Expo

REGISTRATION IS AVAILABLE !

IMEA Annual Business Meeting & Vendor Expo provides an opportunity to learn from industry experts and network with peers. It attracts all levels of the Indiana utility professionals and staff from member communities, as well as IMEA staff.

The conference features educational sessions on technical programs focused on the utility industry. It also provides an opportunity to collaborate with other utilities one on one during the IMEA business meeting.

In order to make sure that all guest are provided hotel room availability we ask that you reserve your room ahead of time. This way we are able to keep track of quantity and increase the group block if needed.

We need your voice to be heard & your experience of the Public Power Industry to share with others during the IMEA Annual Business meeting.

We Look Forward to Your Participation!



13 - 15 October, 2026



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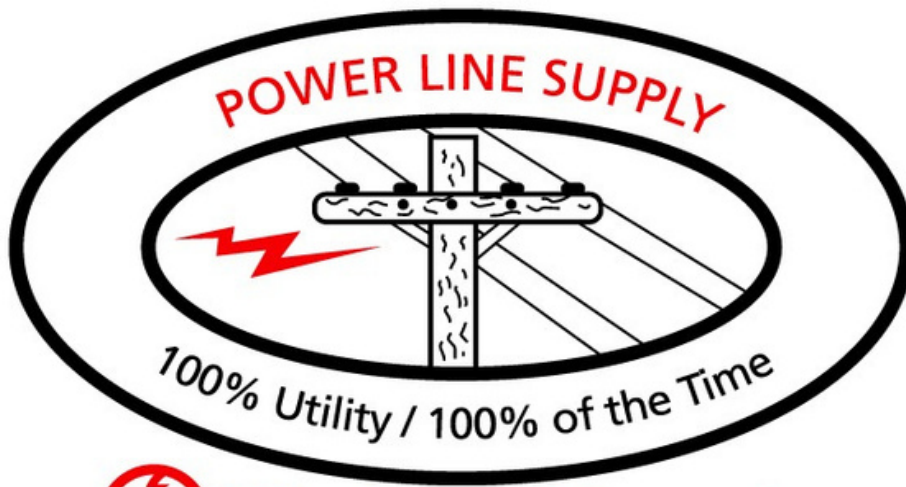
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WHY YOU SHOULD CHOOSE IMEA LINEMAN TRAINING INSTITUTE

- Better Student-to-Instructor Ratio at 10:1 versus larger schools
- Each lineman instructor has at least 20+ years of experience
- Diverse instructor staff. Many of our linemen have not only over 30 years' experience but are well versed in substation, overhead distribution, underground utility construction, and transmission.
- Our instructors are patient, knowledgeable, constructive, and collaborative with students-not adversarial.
- In-house FULL CDL training and testing facilities. This cannot be emphasized enough as obtaining a CDL is critical to job placement, and IMEA makes obtaining a CDL very easy and affordable versus other programs. MOST schools will help you only obtain the permit versus earning the entire CDL. We do ALL of the training and TESTING in-house, on-site.
- Job placement services and career planning services.
- IMEA is a Non-Profit Organization, unlike other schools so we can provide the same training at a significantly lower cost.
- On-site lodging.

*Indiana Municipal Electric
Association
Lineman Training Institute
Saint Joseph College Campus
1027 S. College Ave.
Rensselaer, IN. 47978
Contact Us
765.366.5506
IMEA Executive Director
Duane Richardson
Email: Duane@imea.com*

*Enrollment packages
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OUR PROFESSIONAL SERVICES



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Students will learn about safety working procedures and personal protection equipment.



Electrical Systems

Students will learn the basics of the entire electrical system from generation through transmission, distribution, and conversion.



Basic Electricity

The students will be taught the fundamentals of practical and mathematical application of Direct Current and Alternating Current.



Transformers

Students will learn how and why transformers are used, banked, energized and the various configurations of both Delta and Wye.



Personal Protective Grounding

Students will learn how and why companies work on transmission and distribution lines as well as all equipment and methods used when working.



Rigging And Knot Tying

Students will learn how to tie specific knots, splice rope and learn the proper use of various ropes, slings, block and tackle.

Why Us?

Are You Ready To Begin Your Career Ahead Of Your Competitors?

Our lineman school program will allow you to begin your career ahead of all the rest. Our students have experience performing the jobs of a lineworker, as well as obtaining professional knowledge of the industry while they proceed through our program. Our students are well equipped to stand out from the interview to the actual job. Our program will provide an outlet for electric companies to search for new qualified applicants.

Our students will be able to enter the industry with the technical skills that their employers can't pass up!

Do you want to learn from Experienced and Knowledgeable Linemen?

The lineman school instructors at IMEA Lineman Training Institute have extensive real-world experience in power generation, transmission and distribution. Their exceptional understanding of the industry and what companies are looking for makes our program a cut above other school. Our students will have hands-on experience in the trade and be coached in problem-solving skills in order to help them excel in their work.

Do you want to be able to graduate and have the opportunities for immediate positions anywhere? Then this trade is the right career for you. IMEA Lineman Training Institute provides its lineman school graduates with a listing of municipalities that will be useful in your search. Our instructor's connections with the leaders of the trade will also give the students of IMEA Lineman Training Institute the upper hand at finding a career. Our students will be trained, not only to look for the job, but to find jobs. A career planning class is required to help our students create a resume and learn to find their own jobs.

So is it what you're looking for?



Indiana Municipal Electric Association IMEA Lineman Training Institute

Duane Richardson
765.366.5506

Mailing Address
176 West Logan St. #225
Noblesville, IN. 46060

Our Location
1027 S. College Ave.
Rensselaer, IN. 47978