



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST AND DATES TO ADD TO YOUR 2025 CALENDARS!

- APRIL 7-9, 2025
NECA NOW Conference, Hollywood, FL
- MAY 19-21, 2025
NECA Safety Professionals Conference, Des Moines, IA
- JULY 17-20, 2025
Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Meeting, Alexandria, MN
- SEPT. 12-15, 2025
NECA National Convention Chicago, IL

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IN THE NEWS...

Looking Forward: At the end of the day, remember safety is the priority

*By Chuck Kelly,
February Safety Leader*

As we embark into a new year with new objectives and goals, the landscape of safety could be changing (whether for better or for worse depends on who you ask). With the election of a new president and both houses of Congress controlled by the same party, opportunities exist for things to happen fast.

This could be in the form of a repeal of various rules and regulations, a slow-down of inspections or countless regulatory moves that could potentially undermine your safety and health objectives. (For more on these projections, check out “The Shifting Sands of Government Standards: 2025 OSHA Outlook” in the February 2025 issue of **ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR**.)

Traditionally, and from only a safety perspective, it is common for those in the Republican party to support less regulation and lean toward supporting management objectives, and Democrats focus more on worker protections and ensuring there is either more regulatory oversight or new rules promulgated that focus on worker safety.

SAME SAFETY PRIORITIES

But the real question is this: does the party in charge really influence your outlook, passion and drive to provide a safe working environment for those you are responsible for? The simple answer should be no! As a safety leader, your number one objective is to ensure the organization is protecting its most valuable asset—its employees—and complying with rules and regulations. By doing so, your focus is not on the external factors you cannot control, but internally on what you can do to maintain a culture of safety.

If you look at the last several political administrations, you will see that regardless of their party, the safety landscape remains the same. Yes, there may be an increase or decrease of inspections



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Leadership Training



In late January, Triangle Electric, Williston, ND, hosted a Field Leadership Essentials training at their training center. Over two days, 29 field leaders explored the unique challenges that field leaders face. This course focuses on the knowledge and skills

that every field leader must learn to be an effective manager of people, time, equipment, and materials.

The material was presented by Bob Philipps of Philipps Consulting Group, a NECA National approved provider.



New OSHA Rule Requires Properly Fitting PPE

By Katie Kuehner-Hebert

Construction companies must ensure their personal protective equipment for workers actually fits, according to a new rule finalized in December 2024 by OSHA.

The rule, which was initially proposed in July 2023 and became effective Jan 13, 2025, explicitly requires PPE to properly fit any construction worker. The new standard for the construction industry aligns with the one in place for general industry.

"I've talked to workers in construction, particularly women, who have spoken of personal protective equipment that didn't fit or was simply unavailable at the job site in their size," said Doug Parker, former assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, in a press release announcing the final rule. "PPE must fit properly to work."

PPE includes many different types of protective equipment, such as hard hats and helmets, gloves, safety shoes, safety glasses and goggles, welding helmets and goggles, hearing protection devices, respirators, coveralls, vests, harnesses, and full body suits.



"If PPE does not fit properly, it can make the difference between an employee being safely protected, having inadequate protection, or being dangerously exposed," according to the rule. "In some cases, ill-fitting PPE may not protect an employee at all, and in other cases it may present additional hazards to that employee and to employees who work around them."

For example, sleeves of protective clothing that are too long or gloves that do not fit properly may make it difficult to use tools or operate equipment, putting the wearer and others at risk of exposure to hazards. Additionally, too-long sleeves may get caught in machinery, resulting in injuries such as fractures or amputations, as stated in the rule.

Similarly, the legs of protective garments that are too long could cause tripping hazards for the workers and could also affect others near that worker.

Protective clothing that is too small may increase a worker's exposure to hazards, such as providing insufficient coverage from dangerous machinery or hazardous substances.

The issue of improperly fitting PPE is particularly important for smaller construction workers, including some women, who may not be able to use currently existing standard-size PPE," the rule states. "Fit problems can also affect larger workers, and standard-size PPE does not always accommodate varying body shapes."

Looking Forward *(from page 1)*

or emphasis on a particular standard or rule, but for the most part it is business as usual. Safety is nonnegotiable and apolitical.

That's not to say that we, as safety leaders, should not be involved in rulemaking, standard interpretations and discussions with those who have an agenda different than ours. Safety's involvement in these initiatives is essential to ensuring that outcomes protect workers and enable the organization to conduct business in a manner that does not adversely impact its operations.

WORKING TOGETHER

If we look at this from a personal growth perspective, it should be one of our key performance indicators when setting up yearly goals: "Continue to seek/listen/provide input that differs from our own and assist in educating all parties regarding our business operations and its safety impact."

Working together, be it with labor and management, regulators and industry or all parties together, produces the best outcomes for all. You will not always agree on all things, and there will be times when you may have to compromise, but in the end those tireless efforts pay off. Having an open mind and understanding where others are coming from on an issue provides you with a greater view of the issue overall.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

I've talked about three keys to successful outcomes in previous articles. Share with workers what the objective is, why you're doing it and how you're going to accomplish the task together.

By doing this, you've outlined a clear picture of the task at hand and opened the door for input from others.

The end result will be that all parties believe they have had valuable input in the outcome, which will help ensure a smoother transition in implementing whatever that may be.

So as we look forward to a new year in safety, remember something that I have learned over my long career in the safety field: we achieve more together.



WORKPLACE SAFETY

New Dakotas Chapter Member

Dakotas Chapter NECA is pleased to announce that we have two new NECA members. The Dakotas Chapter has 42 member companies.

CHX Electric
Corey Hendricks,
Owner
Bismarck, ND



Kemp Electric, LLC
Justin Kemp, Owner
Luverne, MN



2025 Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Meeting

Come and join the Dakotas Chapter this summer as we celebrate our annual summer meeting featuring a variety of activities to keep you engaged and educated.

The Board of Directors has decided again this year to pay room expenses for each NECA Member contractor in good standing to send a representative to the 2025 Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Membership Meeting. This year's meeting is set for **July 17-20, 2025** at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, MN. Take advantage of a weekend getaway with your family to enjoy Arrowwood Resort, take in some educational opportunities,

golf, socializing with other NECA contractors, and fun group activities!

We have a lot of fun and excitement in store again this year! Join us for another memorable Dakotas Chapter NECA Annual Summer Meeting!



DIRECTOR'S Corner

With Ed Christian, Executive Director, Dakotas Chapter NECA

Greetings,

Another year with a stress-free bob-sled run was enjoyed with our Premier Partner, Milwaukee Electric Tool representative Pete Carlson. Our annual excursion is filled with a busy schedule, yet it allows us to get out and visit with our member owners and see where things are headed as we move into 2025.

Curt Kasper has been busy coordinating the Leadership Essentials training seminars. He will be communicating the upcoming tech school recruiting events, where he would like you to join him to offer students opportunities for employment. Keep in mind we have a stipend available for recruiting and retention of Tech School Graduates that you employ.

If you have not recently used or signed into necanet.org please do so and find information on all upcoming NECA events and classes that are available to you. The Board of Directors at their December 5, 2024, meeting did approve stipends for members in good standing for attending the following events:

Women in NECA and NECA Now Conference
National Legislative Conference NECA Safety Professional Conference
NECA National Convention

This year the National Convention returns to Chicago, IL, so check your mailbox for up-to-date information on our Summer Meeting and the National Convention.

The Board also approved stipends for online or in person attendance at any Continuing Education program offered through NECA's National Learning Center. Please let us know if you have any questions or if you need assistance registering for an event.

Save the date for your Annual Summer Membership meeting. It will be held at Arrowwood Resort in Alexandria, MN July 17-20, 2025. We will have the Board of Directors meeting on Thursday July 17th and the Membership meeting will be held on Saturday, July 19th. We look forward to our Affiliate members joining us and we thank them in advance for supporting our Annual Summer Membership event.

Forward congratulations to Curt Kasper on his upcoming 10 years with the Dakotas Chapter NECA on March 26th, 2025. We appreciate what Curt has done on behalf of our members.

Best Regards,

Ed Christian



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JATC Apprentice Graduations

The tentative dates for the upcoming JATC apprentice graduations are below. Please watch your email for more details in the coming weeks.

- May 9th - 1426 Graduation; Fargo/Grand Forks
- May 16th - 426 Graduation; Sioux Falls
- May 17th - 714 Graduation; Minot/Bismarck/Williston



National NECA Recognition



National NECA presented the Dakotas Chapter with an award for outstanding involvement as a member of the Political Leadership Council this year. Keep up the good work with your NECAPAC donations!

