**CWA District 3 Occupational Safety and Health Conference Call**

**Wednesday, August 24, 2022**

An announcement was made regarding an on the job fatality that occurred August 2, 2022. A member of Local 3215 was electrocuted while working on an aerial lift truck and died as a result.

Local 3215 President Bobby Smith provided more information regarding the on the job fatality as follows. Nolan Suttles was a member of Local 3215 for 22 years. On August 2, 2022 he was working on a placing truck in Fairview, GA. While stowing the bucket from the ground the boom came in contact with a 3-phase 13,000 volt power line and the truck immediately burst into flames. Emergency rescue personnel could not approach the truck to try and assist until the power company arrived and disconnected the power. By that point the truck was completely destroyed.

Local 3411 reported an on the job accident occurred in Shreveport, LA on July 12, 2022 when a technician, Andrew Williams, fell off of a vehicle. The injuries led to his death on July 18, 2022.

There was discussion amongst several Locals regarding safety flashes, and whether they are still being distributed. The Local, State and District 3 Joint OS&H Committees should be following up to ensure that safety flashes are being distributed. According to some on the call, the AFO and ACE departments do distribute safety flashes, but do not share their safety flashes with each other. [This issue has been referred to the District 3 BST Joint OS&H Committee for discussion, but local and State committees should also work to have safety flashes shared between departments].

Local 3608 asked if there were any OSHA updates regarding the June 15, 2022 fatality in Local 3603 and it was stated that OSHA has not yet followed up with the Local.

Local 3615 wanted to know who made the decision to reduce new Wire Tech training. Locals 3907, 3215 and 3806 also had the same issue and in some Locals there is no “hands on” or field ride training taking place. The Wire Tech training was 10 weeks in 2020, then reduced to 6 weeks in April 2021 due to COVID protocols, then increased to 8 weeks in late 2021 and early 2022 but reduced to 6 weeks in April, 2022. The answer from the Company regarding who made the decision to reduce the weeks of training was “the department”. Examples of new Wire Techs being denied “field ride” or “hands on” training should be provided to the Local Presidents so they can bring the matter to the attention of the appropriate Director.

Local 3608 asked for an update on the question of how someone can transition to the BuckSqueeze (now EZ Squeeze) method of climbing. Labor Relations advised District 3 that employees can request of their manager to be trained on EZ Squeeze. Once an employee is trained and transitions to EZ Squeeze, the transition becomes permanent. The pass/fail course for transitioning from “free climbing” or “point to point” climbing to EZ Squeeze is “Working Above Ground with EZ Squeeze”.

Additionally, the EZ Squeeze fall protection system will be used to replace broken or defective Buck Squeeze units and the course for transitioning from the Buck Squeeze to EZ Squeeze is called “Differences between EZ Squeeze and Bucksqueeze”. Local 3803 reported they had no formal training for Bucksqueeze climbing, but a manager watched as the technicians climbed about 2 feet high. Local 3205 reported they have been told by management that even though technicians have been trained on EZ Squeeze, they can only provide Bucksqueeze equipment. [This matter has been referred to the District 3/BST Joint OS&H Committee].

Several Locals inquired about the Little Giant ladder training. Local 3908 reported they are now conducting hands-on training in their locations. Local 3114 asked how the new ladders would be distributed. The Company has stated that the AFO department will replace all of their ladders with Little Giants. The ACE department said they will replace extension ladders with Little Giants on an as needed basis, but will only be purchasing Little Giant ladders going forward.

Local 3908 reported an update on pole transfers that are not only contract violations, but also create safety hazards when not performed properly. The Company has worked with Locals to identify contractors and power companies that are illegally performing pole transfers and they have sent cease and desist letters where appropriate. There is one manager who is the Point of Contact for all of District 3, Jim Bryant. He is responsible for assigning any and all reported cases of contractor pole transfers to a local manager for action He can be reached at 352-336-5533 or by email at jb3225@att.com.

Isa Shabazz, Staff Representative and Co-Chair of the CWA District 3/BST Joint OS&H Committee reported the following:

1. There is a safety alert system in place that automatically sends notices to technicians in an area where there has been a violent crime or incident. Please let the Committee know if this isn’t happening.
2. Issues with insulating gloves have been corrected.
3. Little Giant ladder training: Supervisors are being certified to provide training on the proper use of the ladders and provide training on how to conduct ladder inspections.
4. Chainsaw Training – The request from the Georgia Locals was for the Company to provide hands-on chainsaw training. The Company has stated that the job aid course is online. [This issue has been escalated to the Network Services Board].
5. CPR Training – The request was for hands-on CPR training but the Company took the position that the online training is sufficient.
6. Isa thanked the Joint OS&H Committee for their work on behalf of our members’ safety.

The next District 3 Occupational Safety and Health conference call is scheduled for Wednesday, December 7 from 1 pm EST – 3 pm EST.