

CWA District 3 Occupational Safety and Health Conference Call

Wednesday, December 7, 2022

An announcement was made that New Hire Wire Technician training has been expanded to twelve weeks. Beginning January, 2023 the new curriculum is scheduled to start calling for a 12 week training period. This includes an extra week of peer guide rides and solo time in the field. Copper training is also included.

Local 3611 reported of hearing that the Company was planning to install 2-way dash cameras in Wire Technician vehicles. Local managers were also recently notifying IHX employees they would be installing 2-way cameras in their vehicles. [District 3 has not been notified of any 2-way camera installation plans].

Local 3608 reported that when the 28 foot ladders were being removed from trucks in AFO and replaced with new Little Giant ladders, the Company was also removing the 24 foot ladders if they were on the truck. There was discussion concerning the need for both ladders – 24 foot ladders for working on the side of a building or house to get below the soffit and 28 foot ladders for working on poles and strands. [The Company responded that coordination at the onset of the Little Giant deployment should have determined which size ladder to send which technician and managers had input to specify their employees' needs. They also stated that no more than two ladders should be on the roof of a vehicle and the recommendation was for one A-frame/combo ladder and one extension ladder (24' or 28'). They noted that exceptions to this should be addressed with the local network manager and safety manager.]

Local 3102 reported their members were told the Company was replacing all 28' ladders with 24' Little Giants. [See note in brackets above.]

Local 3907 asked if mid span use of a ladder is still an option. [It is still an option and the Little Giant extension ladders have a built-in safety feature for performing that work operation.]

Local 3114 asked if the weight limit is the same for both the 24' and 28' Little Giant extension ladders. [The weight rating for both the 24' and 28' Little Giant extension ladders purchased by the Company is 375 pounds.]

Local 3310 reported they have issues with traffic control, specifically where contractors were not providing personnel that would ensure a safe work zone. Some managers have advised that is the best quality of contract employee they can get for the low hourly pay the contract employees make, and also advise that the Company technician is responsible for the job site. This issue will be addressed at the Local OSH Committee and Local Governance Partnership levels.

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

1. Safety Flashes: The Committee has not conducted their 4th quarter 2022 meeting yet, but plan to discuss this issue again when they meet. Meanwhile, local OS&H committees are a good place to start working on having the Company provide these, as well as at Local Governance Partnerships.
2. BuckSqueeze fall protection belts were previously discussed when it was discovered that employees who had been trained on the BuckSqueeze were given EZ Squeeze fall protection belts if the BuckSqueeze needed replacement. This issue has been resolved.

The next District 3 Occupational Safety and Health conference call is scheduled for Wednesday, March 8 from 1 pm EST – 3 pm EST.