

ClientCurrents

News & Views for Building Professionals

United for Quality.

THE ELECTRICAL ALLIANCE
National Electrical Contractors Association and Local 26 IBEW



Volume 4



NFPA 70E is the bridge between the National Electric Code (NEC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Standards. It helps assure building owners that NECA contractors are employing workers who follow the latest safety practices. This guide helps building owners work within the NEC while achieving compliance with OSHA Standards. In the fall of 2008, OSHA made several modifications to the General Industry Standards to protect employees by bringing the standards up to date. The updates protect people, property and work processes against the increase in energy coming through the power grid since the Standards were developed in the 1970s.

All About NFPA 70E

What building owners need to know about working through the National Electric Code, while meeting new OSHA Standards

Vince Miller, director of safety at the Washington, DC Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) trains member electrical contractors on the latest safety standards. A Certified Safety Professional, he has been in the industry for more than 40 years, and has focused on safety for 20. Last month, the Northern Virginia Chapter of the American Society of Safety Engineers (NOVA-ASSE) named him Safety Professional of the Year. Recently, *Client Currents*, a newsletter of the Electrical Alliance, (a cooperative effort between the Washington, DC Chapter of NECA and Local 26, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) sat down with Miller to discuss what building owners need to know about NFPA 70E to achieve OSHA Standards compliance:

CC: What are the key things building owners need to know about OSHA compliance?

VM: Clauses that were grandfathered in to the OSHA Standards have now been updated. Ultimately, building owners are liable for meeting these updated requirements. NFPA 70E links the electrical work performed through the NEC to OSHA's safety standards. For example, OSHA requires that a hazard assessment be performed to determine the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) level for employee protection. To meet this requirement, a facility needs to be surveyed to determine those levels of hazards.

CONTINUED ON BACK



All About NFPA 70E

Story inside

ClientCurrents

THE ELECTRICAL ALLIANCE
National Electrical Contractors Association and Local 26 IBEW

United for Quality.

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

CC: What's new in NFPA 70E in 2009?

VM: A major change in 2009 that a lot of people are talking about has to do with the Arc Flash. In the past, the NEC required that the Arc Flash contain a warning label. Now those labels must indicate calories/cm² of heat level that a person would be exposed to, so that they can acquire the right PPE before performing their work. Again, NFPA 70E provides guidelines for labeling the equipment where the electrical code was vague in its requirement.

CC: How do building owners make sure they are compliant with the new Arc Flash labeling requirements?

VM: Owners must complete surveys of their facilities and label the Arc Flash if a hazard exists, every five years, which seems like a big task. However, electrical contractors can do a lot. They have the skills and software to perform the surveys and label the equipment. They'll also discover risks to the facility before an incident occurs and can implement corrective measures. And finally, new technology exists that can minimize future equipment damage—installing this technology is affordable compared to the old technology and the potential damage.

CC: How are Electrical Alliance contractors specifically geared toward helping building owners achieve NFPA 70E compliance?

VM: OSHA requires that workers performing this work are trained and qualified and that the training is documented. Electrical Alliance contractors hire journeymen electricians that have completed an intensive five-year apprenticeship program that includes classroom and hands-on job site training. OSHA also requires that electricians performing these tasks are First Aid/CPR certified, which is included in the apprentices' training. In addition, Electrical Safety Awareness courses are taught through the Washington, DC Chapter of NECA to experienced electricians so they're getting regular refreshers on safety.

CC: What are some other ways Electrical Alliance contractors help building owners?

VM: Electrical Alliance contractors try to develop partnerships with building owners and also general contractors through more communication and education. NFPA 70E requires communication between owners and subcontractors about hazards on the job site, so the contractors notify owners when they find problems. It also requires electrical contractors to complete work in deenergized zones, which can sometimes be difficult to achieve, but the contractors are educating owners on the importance of more deenergized time periods to reduce risk to personnel and property.