

From the Chairman:



Last month the NUTSEA Board of Directors took a Thursday, Friday, and Saturday out of their busy schedules to attend the planning meeting for the 68th Annual Conference of our group. We put in a long planning day sandwiched in between a couple of travel days (we all know airports are no fun in the post-911 era). But I'm most pleased to tell you that when the dust settled we came up with a first class agenda for our conference. And while I *think* you're going to like what we've scheduled, I *know* you're going to like the location!

Charleston, South Carolina is a beautiful city, full of history and culture and wonderful people. And I know the spouses of our members are going to love the shopping---there are more stores and shops close to our hotel than Carter has liver pills. The credit cards will be smokin'! And the historic Francis Marion Hotel is a wonderful location as well as a perfect hub for our activities. Charleston is a terrific travel destination.



Board members were "all ears" as our hosts from South Carolina presented details of the agenda. Here Sarah Mattern explains plans for a Sunday tour of the Boone Plantation as Don Harbuck, Scott Bryant, and Caroline look on.



Board members Bobby Love (NC), Mike Bergeaux (LA), Jim Wright (GA), Terry Adkins(IN), and Vernon Shearer (KY) listen intently as the South Carolina host committee outlines the meeting plans for the conference in September.

Our hosts from the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina are working diligently to make our

conference rewarding and memorable. I know Scott Bryant, Vice President of Loss Control and Training for the Electric Cooperatives of South Carolina, has already emailed our group and "wetted your appetite" for what's to come in seven short months. I just wanted to reaffirm what he's already said—good place, good agenda, good people! And one more note...the Board worked extremely hard to keep our

costs down. That means no raise in conference fees. In fact, we were able to reduce them. How about that.....

And a final note. I want to express my appreciation to your peers on the Board* for their hard work and accomplishments at the planning meeting. From my perspective, they are greatly involved and dedicated to making our organization effective for the membership. NUTSEA's goal is to provide us with a forum to exchange information, experiences, and ideas so we might better serve our utility

The lobby of the historic Francis Marion Hotel proved to be a good meeting place when the Board headed out to dinner after a day of planning. Here Vernon Shearer (KY), Fran Achilles (SC), and Jamie Hull (PA) wait for the rest of the group before we headed to the Oak Steak House, a Charleston "must" when you're here in September.



workforce. When we're better at what we do, our linemen and electricians are safer at what they do. The program that our Board has put together should rejuvenate us, educate us, and motivate us. That's a tall order, and I think they've accomplished the task.

Stay warm this winter (-1° at my house this morning!) and stay safe. Stay tuned for more information on the Conference. And save the dates---September 26th-29th in Charleston, South Carolina. I hope to see all of you there.

Regards,

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SAVE THE DATE!!
2010 NUTSEA Annual Conference
Charleston, SC
September 26-29, 2010

Best Practices for Safety Related Tools for Fiberglass, Grounds/Jumpers, and Rubber Goods

By Matt Dell, owner, Hi-Line Utility Supply Elgin, IL







Prior to 1950, sources report that 30% of all linemen were electrocuted on the job. As a result, “Lineman” has been ranked as one of the ten most dangerous jobs by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Since then, insulated equipment such as fiberglass tools and rubber goods, along with well documented safety techniques and work standards have improved safety dramatically. Also, mandated periodic safety tests help to keep tools and equipment in working order.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulates how most electrical equipment is tested. OSHA's regulations are based on standards issued by ASTM International (Originally known as the American Society for Testing and Materials), an organization whose members are made up of professionals from a number of industries, including the electrical industry. But these standards are the minimum standards - most safety professionals recommend moving beyond minimum standards. Most utilities, coops, contractors and linemen will take extra steps to insure worker safety and to earn top safety rankings, something the industry is placing great value upon as a quality evaluation measure.

Fiberglass Tools & Equipment

Fiberglass tools and equipment such as hot sticks, gins, arms, ladders, and platforms may seem indestructible, but they're not. Fiberglass doesn't conduct electricity like metal, but it can become nicked and scratched, which could compromise the integrity of the tool and the user's safety. If a scratch or nick occurs in wet weather, water could infiltrate the inner core of the fiberglass material allowing it to become a conductor.

For this reason, when tested, fiberglass must pass a wet test and a dry test. OSHA regulation 1910.269 requires inspection and testing of hot sticks and arms every two years. The tests for fiberglass are based on ASTM F711-02, page 334 of the ASTM manual.


ASTM Standards for Fiberglass Testing		
	2 Years	If Damage Suspected
 Universal	Required	Required
 Shotguns/Grip-All	Required	Required
 Telescoping	Required	Required
 Fiberglass Tools	Optional	Required
 Ladders	Optional	Required
 Platforms	Optional	Required

Testing is not required for platforms and ladders unless suspected damage has occurred. Even so, it is in the best interest of electrical workers to test this equipment on a periodic

basis, because visible inspection does not reveal if the inner core of the fiberglass has been compromised in some way.

Fiberglass used in electrical work should be waxed every three months to prevent water from sheeting on the fiberglass and conducting electricity during wet weather on the job. Special waxes are available. It is also critical to keep the equipment free of dirt and mud as these materials can conduct electricity and cause electrical shock.

The best practice for linemen and electrical workers regarding fiberglass tools is to **inspect, protect, and clean!** Before each usage, inspect the equipment for nicks and scratches, dirt and mud, and how the wax is holding up. Make sure the equipment is handled with care on the job and properly stored after the job in the proper carrying cases. Keep the equipment clean. Have it tested regularly: some companies require testing for fiberglass tools, such as hot sticks, every six months. Some companies want to test after every job.

Best Practices					
	After Every Job	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years	If Damage Suspected
 Universal	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
 Shotguns/Grip-All	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
 Telescoping	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required	Required
 Fiberglass Tools	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required
 Ladders	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required
 Platforms	Optional	Optional	Optional	Optional	Required

But what is a company to do with all those suspect fiberglass products laying around a warehouse? If you suspect that the fiberglass has been damaged, you don't have to throw it away. Fiberglass is repairable! It can be restored to like new condition in a proper fiberglass workshop. Hi-Line Utility Supply Company repairs all types of fiberglass equipment for its clients, and then tests them to make sure they are in good working order, just like new!

- And it's the **GREEN** thing to do
- Saves \$
- Eliminates landfill



The result is companies save thousands of dollars from buying new equipment and prevent suspect equipment from filling up landfills!

Grounds and Jumpers

Grounds and jumpers differ in composition based upon the intended use. If grounds or jumpers are used improperly with the wrong voltage, severe damage can occur, rendering

the equipment unsafe *for the next usage*. Rough usage of this equipment can also cause damage. Dirt and corrosion on the clamps and heads of grounds and jumpers can also cause damage and allow the equipment to fail.

OSHA does not yet require testing of grounds and jumpers unless suspected damage has occurred, but many expect that testing will be required within the next few years.

To properly test grounds and jumpers, they must be taken apart. Every component must be tested separately. Then, they must be assembled and tested again as a whole. It is a painstaking and tedious process. It is critical that knowledgeable people assemble grounds and jumpers so that the equipment functions properly on the job. The philosophy -inspect, protect and clean- rings as true for grounds and jumpers as it does for fiberglass. Many products are available for the proper storage and transportation of grounds and jumpers. These products will protect the equipment from damage, dirt, and corrosion. It is the best practice to handle grounds and jumpers with care. Even though they look indestructible, they are not!



Best Practices			
	After Every Job	1 Year	If Damage Suspected
Grounds	Optional	Optional	Required
Jumpers	Optional	Optional	Required

Rubber Goods

Rubber is the number one safety material used by electrical workers. Rubber garments such as sleeves, boots and gloves, as well as rubber blankets, line hose and other equipment, are commonplace and required on the job for every electrical worker. But only one-eighth inch of rubber separates electrical workers from a deadly dose of electricity.

Natural Rubber, used in high voltage gloves, is a natural material. It is fragile and decomposes over time. It is susceptible to sunlight and the ozone in the air that occurs naturally. Low voltage gloves and other electrical safety products can be also made with synthetic Type II rubber. But even with this material, electrical workers often work with



Knicks, scratches, pinholes, tears, and even ozone, can compromise rubber's effectiveness as an insulator.

sharp tools and other equipment that can puncture or tear natural and synthetic rubber. Even the tiniest pinhole can allow electricity to bypass the rubber and seek the next conductor: the user!

For this reason, OSHA requires more frequent testing of rubber goods than it does for other electrical equipment. Like fiberglass, as well as grounds and jumpers, the best practice is to inspect, protect and clean rubber goods. Dirt can compromise the rubber's ability to insulate, therefore dirty rubber goods should not be used on the job.

Like other electrical equipment, OSHA requires that all rubber goods must be tested if damage is suspected. The

minimum standard requires that gloves must be routinely tested every six months, while sleeves and blankets must be tested annually. The testing of line hose and hoods is optional, according to OSHA, unless damage is suspected.

ASTM Standards for Rubber Goods				
	6 Months	1 Year	If Damage Suspected	
 Gloves	Required		Required	
 Sleeves	Optional	Required	Required	
 Blankets	Optional	Required	Required	
 Line Hose	Optional	Optional	Required	
 Hoods	Optional	Optional	Required	

Most electrical workers exceed the OSHA requirement. The best practice is to have rubber equipment cleaned and tested more frequently.

Best Practices					
	30 Days	60 Days	6 Months	1 Year	If Damage Suspected
 Gloves	Optional	Optional	Required	Required	Required
 Sleeves		Optional	Optional	Required	Required
 Blankets		Optional	Optional	Required	Required
 Line Hose			Optional	Optional	Required
 Hoods			Optional	Optional	Required

There are many products on the market for the proper care and transportation of rubber goods. It is critical that electrical workers follow protocol and utilize these products to protect their rubber goods. Visual inspection of rubber goods prior to use is also critical and is an OSHA requirement.

Portable field glove inflators allow users to practice spot inspections of the integrity of rubber gloves prior to use near live lines. Leather glove protectors are also essential for the protection of the rubber gloves. The leather protects the rubber, while the rubber protects the worker.



Better Safety Records Mean Fewer Injuries, Fewer Fines

Companies that work with electricity work hard to protect their safety records. Safety records are becoming one of the industry's quality standard measurements. Contractors with better safety records and the latest equipment earn more jobs from utilities. Also,

because OSHA can levy fines for failing to meet minimum standards, it is in everyone's best interests to institute an effective and mandatory safety program that exceeds OSHA standards. When evaluating safety programs, companies should institute "inspect, protect, and clean" as a policy. Caring for, protecting during transport and storage, and keeping tools and equipment clean and in good working order makes good common sense and good safety sense. It's also a best practice!

Hi-Line Utility Supply Co. is a tool distributor with over 10,000 hard-to-find tools and equipment for electrical work in stock, with a fully compliant manufacturer-certified tool repair and warranty center. The company cleans and tests over 300,000 rubber goods and fiberglass tools each year. The company has assembled more than 1 million sets of temporary grounds or jumpers since its founding, 50 years ago in 1960. You can learn more about Hi-Line Utility Supply Co. at <http://www.hilineco.com> or call 800-323-6606.