

The Increasing Cost of Non-Compliance

By: Construction Safety Council

As required by law, OSHA has recently updated the monetary penalties applicable to safety violations cited in America’s workplaces. These amounts are intended to serve as a financial deterrent to employers who are responsible for providing healthful environments for their employees.

In 2021, the maximum penalty for violations classified as “serious” and “other-than-serious” has increased 1.2%, from \$13,494 to \$13,653. The maximum penalty for “willful” or “repeated” violations increased the same, from \$134,937 to \$136,532.

To better understand current trends in OSHA issuance of citations, the Construction Safety Council conducts research on inspections and offenses in the local marketplace. Upon review of data from last year, fifteen (15) inspections of electrical contractors in Illinois were performed by OSHA. Two-thirds of these resulted in fines totaling more than \$107,000.

Leading the list of most frequently-cited violations was the failure to provide adequate fall protection to employees. It is a recurring theme among all construction trades – not just electricians.

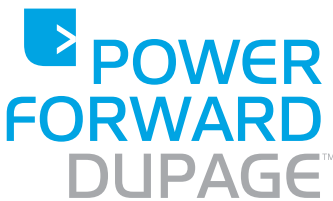
However, the electrical industry is more likely to experience the second-leading violation: lack of protection for employees working around live sources of power. The OSHA standard (29 CFR 1926.416) is very specific on this matter. It provides strategies to avoid these jobsite risks and the costly penalties for failure to comply.

An employer commitment to a robust training program is critical to minimizing the threat of injury or death in the workplace. Employees who are deemed “competent” are not only more knowledgeable about the dangers of electricity, but also able to lead co-workers and help them protect themselves. Work procedures and best practices can be implemented to ensure the safety of those who operate in close proximity to electrical circuits.

Education begins through the National Safety Education Center, which is operated by the Construction Safety Council in partnership with Northern Illinois University, as one of only 26 OSHA-authorized training centers in the country - and the only one within the State of Illinois. Employers and employees can take advantage of the instruction available about compliance with OSHA standards. This will save money – and lives.

The **Electrical Standards Course (#3095)** is a four-day curriculum that teaches students to recognize and evaluate electrical hazards, determine abatement measures, and understand the proper use of PPE. Open enrollment in this one-of-a-kind safety program is available in March and September each year. It is another example of the continued commitment by PowerForward DuPage and the Construction Safety Council to prepare contractors and IBEW members to **Work Smart, Build Safe.**

A schedule of electrical safety training programs is available at www.buildsafe.org



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The Construction Safety Council, in partnership with the NECA-IBEW 701 Safety Committee, would like to remind you to Work Smart, Build Safe!



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