



Safety On The Job

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Chairman, IATSE Safety Committee



In the past few years, we have been witness to many economic changes that directly affect us in the workplace. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), globalization and other economic concerns such as the rising cost of fuel, etc., have placed a tremendous burden on our industries. Many States have countered with wage based incentives and other monetary savings that are designed to entice productions to continue working in the United States. The International has responded by crafting agreements specifically designed to attract productions that would have produced their shows in other countries due to budget constraints.

One of the side effects of this phenomenon is the daily work routines we are often required to maintain. The work day is becoming longer and the requirements that we are faced with from productions, place an extra burden on us as we try to survive in this environment. Many times we are called upon to perform not only our assigned tasks but more importantly, tasks that would normally be the jurisdiction of another member of the crew. As an example, you could plug in an electrical device and not know whether it is safe to do so. You could overload a circuit or worse yet, plug it into DC power. Unless you were part of the electrical crew you may not have the experience to recognize the hazard. Another

example could be for you to hang a piece of equipment over the heads of the performers and not know if it is securely rigged. Another case in point could be that you are asked to perform the work that normally would be handled by a Special Effects Technician. This can be extremely hazardous not only for other crew members and the actors but also for the person attempting to create the effect. These examples are a stretch but it has been known to happen.

As we struggle to survive in the workplace and provide for our families, it is important not to attempt a task that we are not trained to perform. If you feel that you are being asked to do something that is unsafe, I urge you to call you Business Agent. That's part of their responsibilities to the members of your Local. As I have stated in the past, everyone has the right to go home the same way the went to work. Do not let the apprehension or fear of keeping your job place you in a situation that could place you in a compromising position.

For those members in California who are subjected to high temperatures while working in an outdoor setting, Cal-OSHA is adopting a Standard on Heat Illness Prevention.

The proposal, §3395 of Title 8 has been adopted by the Standards Board as an emergency Standard and should be in effect in the very near future. More information may be found on Cal-OSHA's web site located at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Heatillnessregtext-8-22-05.pdf>. We will keep you informed of the progress of this Standard.

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