



A Source of Safety

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We've talked about safety plans and attitudes. Employer's responsibility for providing a safe workplace are a given, and our participation in a safety program is necessary for its success. Beyond these official obligations are our obligations to the sisters and brothers who work beside us, our families, and ourselves.

Many employers have excellent safety programs. They offer training, information, and people that can help resolve problems and answer questions. This is the way things are suppose to work. But, how do you protect yourself if you work for someone with an ineffective program or someone who doesn't know or care?

There are many resources available to people to protect themselves. A great resource is the Internet. Google in a subject and you can get millions of Web sites to look at. The problem with the Internet is if you Google in a subject you get millions of Web sites to look. Here are a few specific places to go:

The OSHA Web site has a great deal of useful information (<http://osha.gov>). Going to the site you will find many helpful tools to access information. You can search for regulations by subject. There are eTools that include power point presentations, Topic Pages, and advisory pages with information and links (<http://osha.gov/dts/osta/oshasoft/index.html>).

About half of the states have their own OSHA plan. These state plans have their own Web sites. You can go to the Federal OSHA Web site to find if your state has its own plan and a link to its site (<http://osha.gov/html/oshdir.html>). Sometimes you can find useful information on a state's Web site other than your own. This can be very helpful, just remember what jurisdiction the information covers.

Another Web site is the Contract Services Administrative Trust Fund Web site (csatf.org) Even though the information is aimed at the television and motion picture portions of the entertainment industry there are recommendations for dealing with many hazards encountered by other segments of our industry. There are more than

40 bulletins, guidelines, and informational fact sheets available to anyone on a large range of subjects (<http://csatf.org/bulletintro.shtml>).

The Entertainment Services & Technology Association (ESTA) is another source of information (esta.org). Through the Web site you can access the Technical Standards Committee, the ANSI standards writing committees for the entertainment industry, and their information (<http://esta.org/tsp/about/index.html>). You can also visit the ESTA Foundation (<http://www.estafoundation.org>). The Foundation is involved with creating and supporting educational programs in the entertainment industry. This group is fairly young, but it has some good materials and classes, and there is more to come.

Other subjects that the Internet is a useful tool are product information. Many companies offer safety manuals, spec sheets, user guidelines, material safety data sheets, and other information concerning their product and equipment.

Some large employers offer safety information on the company Web sites. These may include information on job duties, inspection procedures, and reporting procedures as well as safety contact information.

Your Local may also be a source of information and training. Many IATSE Locals have safety committees and representatives who compile information concerning safety issue that affect their membership. Your Business Agent should also be a source of information. If the Business Agent does not have the information you need, hopefully, they will be able to get it for you.

Attend any training your employer offers. Ask for information from employers and suppliers. Gather information about your job.

It is a good idea to compile a "work library". As you come in contact with products, equipment, tools, or situations that affect your work you should keep that information for later use or to share with your sisters and brothers. Manuals, catalogs, textbooks, and Web sites should all be part of your library.

As professionals we should try to be good at and as well informed about our jobs as we can. Being professional will get us more work and justify the money we ask for. IATSE members are the best entertainment industry workers around; let's work to keep it that way.