

The Midwest Wireman

BY ELECTRICIANS, FOR ELECTRICIANS

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Special points of Interest:

- Safety Tips & Time Savers
- Code Updates
- Growing Labor Shortages?
- <http://www.ibew22.org>

**"Assumptions
allow the best in
life to pass you
by."**

John Sales

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Source Electric Signs a Contract with Local 22

On February 2, 2007 the owners of Source Electric signed a collective bargaining agreement with IBEW Local 22. This was due to the efforts of their employees.

During the first week of February '07 Local 22 organizers Brad Doyle, Brett Johnson, and Bob Sidzyk were contacted by employee representatives of Source Electric. They asked for help dealing with their employer.

After speaking with the Local representatives, the employees decided to call a meeting. Local 22 again was contacted and asked if they could attend. After listening to employee concerns, it was explained why it was important that they, the employees, stick together and how easy it would be to get an agreement.

All of the electricians and apprentices signed a letter asking that the owners of Source Electric to recognize IBEW Local 22 as their collective bargaining agent. It was decided to make the request the next morning, February 2. Everyone met at the shop the next morning a little before 7:00 a.m. The owners arrived a little after 8:00 a.m.

The letter of recognition was given to the employers. After a review, they handed the letter back. One of the employees then read the letter aloud. He handed the letter to a second employee who asked each of his co-workers if they had signed the letter. Each answered "Yes." The employers declined to sign the agreement. The employees responded by saying they would return to work as soon as the contract was signed. The contract was signed at approximately 12:00 p.m. that same day.

This example proves what we have been saying all along. You have more bargaining power as a group than you do as an individual. If you would like the same situation where you work, contact us. Talk with you soon!

UNITED WE BARGAIN, DIVIDED WE BEG

Licensed Residential Electricians Needed

If you, or anyone you know, is a licensed residential Electrician and is looking for a job or change, contact us at 402-331-8147. Here is the opportunity you've been looking for.

Get a great job with an established contractor. Have opportunities for advancement. Work in these areas of construction: new home (track to custom), residential re-model, residential service (old and new), small commercial (strip malls, tenant bay finishes, site work, etc.)

The electrical contractors of Local 22 are hiring residential electricians. They are looking for qualified people who want to do residential work. The wage and benefit package for a Residential Journeyman is currently \$26.53. This package includes family health insurance, pensions, and training. Isn't it time you checked us out for yourself?

We will be holding a Residential Open House the evening of April 24th, 2007 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Come meet the contractors and ask your questions. See you there.

Factoids and FunnStuff

The human foot has 26 bones, 33 joints, 107 ligaments, 19 muscles and tendons. The 52 bones in your feet make up about 25 percent of all the bones in your body.

The first minimum wage, of twenty-five cents, was established by Congress in 1938.

To prevent some numbers from occurring more frequently than others, dice used in crap games in Las Vegas are manufactured to a tolerance of 0.0002 inches, less than 1/17 the thickness of a human hair.

The first toy product ever advertised on television was Mr. Potato Head®. Introduced in 1952, Mr. Potato Head® took advantage of TV's explosive growth to gain access to tens of millions of newly "plugged-in" households.

If you never get thirsty, you need to drink more water. When the human body is dehydrated, its thirst mechanism shuts off.

Bacteria, the tiniest free-living cells, are so small that a single drop of liquid may contain 50 million of them.

Remember, They Can't Do It Without You!

OPEN HOUSE OPEN HOUSE OPEN HOUSE OPEN HOUSE

Local 22 and the National Electrical Contractors Association, Nebraska Chapter, will be hosting an Open House on Tuesday April 24th, 2007 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. for Residential Electricians. The Open House will be held in the meeting hall located at 8946 L Street Omaha, NE, East Building.

Come meet our contractors and get your questions answered. Representatives from Local 22 will also be available to answer any question you have about the IBEW. See you there!



Wanted: Skilled Labor.... by Beck Ireland

According to the latest numbers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Americans are hard at work. At last count, the total U.S. unemployment rate stood at the low seasonally adjusted rate of 4.5%, unchanged from November and down from 4.9% at this time in 2005. Throughout 2006, the U.S. economy fostered job growth, although the numbers fell just slightly below the long-term monthly average of 130,000 new jobs per month, or 1.6 million new jobs per year, experienced since 1989.

In addition, the U.S. construction put-in-place total is predicted to remain healthy. Reed Construction Data, Norcross, Ga., forecasts generous year-over-year increases of more than 4% into 2008. McGraw-Hill Construction is more modest with its 2007 prediction, a slight -1% decline. What this means for both the electrical contracting and engineering fields is there should be plenty of projects in 2007. The bad news is firms may have difficulty finding qualified workers or, if they do, then they'll have to offer higher salaries and better benefits to remain competitive. The imminent retirement of the baby-boomers, an increase in manufacturing jobs for the first time in years, rumors of off-shoring design services, and stricter immigration laws may all cause a labor shortage that will begin in 2007 and, ironically, continue as long as the construction industry thrives.

Skilled labor shortage. Among the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' three major subcategories — construction, services, and manufacturing — year-over-year employment growth for construction was the strongest. After a few tough years in the negative, manufacturing has remained about even at 0%, ironically becoming a source of competition for young workers who might otherwise make a career in the construction field.

Below its peak level of 4.8% in both April 2005 and January 2006, construction came in at a 3% rate in July 2006. Projections show that by the year 2014, the national need for electrical workers will increase to more than 734,000 — more than 78,000 currently employed in the field. Construction employment boasts 7,455,000 jobs, losing 3,000 jobs in December but registering a 0.5% increase over December 2005. Industry analysis surmises that the drop is due to the slowdown in the residential market, which lost 16,000 jobs in December and 100,000 for the year — a rate of -3% for 2006. What keeps the industry healthy, however, is that the non-residential markets were able to add 7,600 jobs in December and 114,000 through 2006, and heavy and civil engineering construction added 5,700 jobs in December and 25,000 throughout 2006, for a rate of 2.6%.

Editors Commentary

What does this all mean? You offer a very valuable service. We live in a country where the laws of supply and demand rule, yet our wage and benefits continue to stagnate. If the supply of skilled, qualified craftsmen continue to shrink as suggested by the above article, then why, under the rule of supply and demand, haven't our wages and benefits increased accordingly? Its time you start questioning this. You are highly skilled and trained and it's time your compensation reflects the economic situation we live in.

2005 Code Q&A...By Steven Owen This section was reorganized with editorial changes to add clarity and uniform interpretation. (**Note:** Code text has been paraphrased.)

Required Information

Q. According to 110.16, certain information is required on the label when marking switchboards, panel boards, industrial control panels, meter socket enclosures, and motor control centers. To be compliant with this section of the Code, which of the following examples best illustrates the written text of 110.16? The arc flash analysis determined that the incident energy at an industrial control panel is 6 cal/cm². The industrial control panel will require troubleshooting, as well as testing for voltage by qualified persons.

- A) Beware. Shock boundary 36 in.
- B) Hot. Energized. Energized work permit required. Job briefing not required for testing and troubleshooting.
- C) Warning. Arc flash and shock hazard. Appropriate PPE required.
- D) Warning. Job briefing required before starting work. Limited approach boundary.

Answer: C

Explanation: In part, the text of 110.16 states that switchboards, panel boards, industrial control panels, meter socket enclosures, and motor control centers, in other than dwelling occupancies, shall be field marked to warn qualified persons of potential electric arc flash hazards. The marking shall be located as to be clearly visible to qualified persons before examining, adjusting, servicing, or maintaining the equipment. The text does not require incident energy values to be marked on the label.

Although it's important to follow the requirements of NFPA 70E, Sections 130.2 and 130.3, it must be noted that the reference to NFPA 70E in the 2005 NEC is in the form of a fine print note (FPN). At minimum, the answer given in (C) above would be adequate. However, it's permissible to provide more information, if desired.

Multiple Services

Q. An existing corporate data center is concerned about possible loss of power due to the fact that it is supplied by only one service. The existing feed consists of a 1600A, 208Y/120V, 3-phase, four-wire service. Data center management personnel propose to add an additional service. What are the Code-compliant options available to the data center management team?

- A) An additional service cannot be added; this is a violation of 225.30.
- B) An additional service can only be added if the capacity requirements exceed 2000A.
- C) An additional service can only be added if it is of different characteristics. For example, it is a single-phase, 240/120V, 3-wire service.
- D) An additional service identical to the existing service may be installed for "enhanced reliability."

Answer: D

Explanation: Per a change to 230.2(A)(6) of the 2005 NEC, an additional service per 230.2(A)(6) or an additional feeder per 220.30(A)(6) may be installed for the purpose of "enhanced reliability." The additional service or feeder may be identical to the existing service or feeder.

HOURLY POWER

In a continuing effort to expand the message and outreach of the IBEW, a new website has been initiated, <http://ibewhourpower.com>. The Hour Power website has everything from job tips, outdoor videos, and feature stories about electrical workers from around the country. Please take time to visit the site and look around. We would be very interested in what you think about the Hour Power site. You can send your e-mails to: 22@ibew22.org



Unions See Their Star Rising...by David R. Francis

American corporate executives spend several hundred million dollars a year on "union avoidance" lawyers and consultants (less politely called "union busters,") to keep their companies union-free. Other costs involved in campaigns against trade unions may well boost the bill above \$1 billion a year, estimates management professor John Logan.

The United States, says Mr. Logan of the London School of Economics, is the only industrialized nation to have a "union avoidance" industry of any size engaged in helping management resist unionization, undermine union strength, or unload existing unions. This industry, consisting of dozens of law firms and consultancies, has ballooned since the 1970s. Its success is one reason why trade union membership has declined to 7.4 percent of nonsupervisory workers in the private sector and 35 percent of nonsupervisory government workers, or 12 percent overall in 2006, down from 12.5 percent in 2005.

That success, say trade union supporters, hangs on intimidating workers with bullying techniques that are accommodated by toothless laws and pro-management federal institutions.

But Stewart Acuff, organizing director of the AFL-CIO, the confederation of American trade unions, is not discouraged. Public opinion polls show, he says in an interview, that over the past eight or nine years more and more American workers want union representation. A 2006 poll finds that, given a choice between a union and no representation at all, 32 percent of nonunion workers would vote for a trade union. And 90 percent of unionized workers would vote to keep their union.

Perhaps that's no surprise. Studies find that unionized workers are paid better on average than nonunion workers in the same industry. And that fact explains in some degree why management figures it's worth hiring "union avoidance" professionals to keep union organizers at bay. In fact, 70 percent of firms facing a union organizing campaign hire them.

Further, these "union busters" create demand for their services by stirring up management fears that unionization could have dire consequences for their firms, says Logan. They contribute to the aggressive and adversarial nature of US labor-management relations, he says. Encouraged by the Democratic Party's success in last year's congressional election and the passing of the Employee Free Choice Act by the House of Representatives on March 1, Mr. Acuff sees a revival of the union movement ahead.

That bill received support from 13 House Republicans. Acuff predicts that when the Senate takes up the legislation, it will get the 60 votes needed to avoid a filibuster, but not the two-thirds vote needed to escape a promised veto by President Bush. So it may take the election of a President in 2008 to get labor laws amended to facilitate more union organizing, he says.

The proposed law provides for real penalties for firing a union organizer. Though illegal now, the penalty for such firings is so immaterial that companies do so in 1 out of 4 workplaces where unions are attempting to organize employees, finds Kate Bronfenbrenner, an expert at Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y.

Currently, in cases where an illegal firing is determined, the worker gets only back pay minus any earnings he or she has received from a replacement job. After seven years, a worker in one case was reinstated to his job and got a mere \$1,300 in back pay, notes Lance Compa, who also teaches at Cornell. The proposed law would provide for a \$2,000 penalty plus triple back pay.

Under existing law, managers can "predict" that their plant and jobs could be sent elsewhere, often to Mexico. But they can't "threaten" to do so – a difference that is meaningless to workers concerned about jobs in uncertain times.

The Free Choice Act also would change when unions are recognized. The proposed law lets unions be recognized if they get a majority of workers to sign a card saying they want union representation. The US Chamber of Commerce charges that this would threaten workers' choices, making them vulnerable to coercion by union organizers. Still, Bronfenbrenner sees public opinion shifting in favor of organized labor

If unions grow, "worker power," Acuff says, can provide an alternative to "unchecked corporate power" and push more workers back into the middle class.

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Remember, They Can't Do It Without You!

Time Savers

Indicator Bulb Removal

If you don't have the small rubber tool to remove indicator bulbs, use a piece of electrical tape. Put the sticky side to the bulb and now you can turn it easily or pull it out.

Firewall Penetrations

Often, you need to run conduits through fire-rated walls. Since the gap around the conduit must be as small as possible, use a saw made from a short length of conduit that has saw teeth cut into it. They do not have to be perfect. Have a set of three (1/2", 3/4" and 1" sizes) that fit inside one another for storage. To use, simply determine where the conduit is to go through the wall, place the "saw" at that point, tap lightly to start the teeth, then twist the conduit to cut the hole. The advantage of doing it this way is that the opposite side of the wall does not "blow out" as it would by driving a hole and also the holes are perfectly aligned with each other since the conduit is the same diameter as the saw. Very little fire-stopping compound is required.

Protect Your Hole saw

To keep from breaking the 1/4" bit or the teeth on the 7/8" hole saw when drilling in a metal box, put a 1/4" x 1-1/4" fender washer over the center of the hole to be drilled, the hole saw teeth will hit the fender washer and spin. The fender washer can be removed, and the hole can be drilled. The fender washer keeps the teeth from grabbing into the metal of the box.