



Local Union 97

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

New York State

Local 97 Leading by Example During Times of Crisis

In these unprecedented times, I recognize the challenges we all must face as we try to balance our home life with our work life and for those of you who are working from home, those worlds have collided. These every day pressures will undoubtedly increase, especially for our younger members with children at home and our members that care for elderly relatives. Please do not hesitate to reach out for help when needed.

As your Local 97 staff continues to work hard for you, be assured we are putting you, your families and your health and safety as our number one priority.

I understand there is frustration over several issues related to this crisis, however, we are reacting to real life situations as they happen and at times may need to step back and re-think those decisions. We have had many suggestions from members. We continue to forward them to the companies to try and work together to come up with the best solutions. Please keep in mind that many of these changes require approval from other authorities (PSC, Governor's office, NYISO etc...) and will not happen overnight.

Local 97 staff are on daily calls with several of our properties and in constant communication with others. With that said, I would ask that not only as members of the IBEW, but as residents of the community, that you help us help you.

As utility/generation workers, we are essential to the infrastructure which enables the facilities (hospitals, doctor's office, EMT's, 911 center...) to provide critical care to those in need, and we must take that responsibility seriously. That means we must respond when called upon. It may mean temporarily working a little differently, however, we need to stand tall and let everyone know that IBEW Local 97 is ready, willing and able to do their part in fighting this crisis!! This is not the time to allow this crisis be an excuse to not get our essential jobs done. Unfortunately, tens of thousands of our neighbors are losing their jobs in this recession and the future looks bleak for them. We have gone to great lengths to ensure that we remain gainfully employed.

I have been in contact with other IBEW Utility Unions from across the state and everyone is doing their best to not only protect our work, but to adapt to an ever-changing environment as we weather this pandemic. As we react to each situation, please remain patient and use common sense as new work plans may arise.

We also need to do our part to flatten the curve and stop the spread of this deadly virus. On top of numerous communications related to proper hygiene, please find below other suggestions that we may not think about as we go about our daily routine.

We have closed the Buffalo, Albany, Syracuse and Oswego Union offices to all walk-in traffic. All Union offices are still operating with a very limited staff and fielding phone calls only. All meetings, including sub-divisional and monthly main body meetings have been canceled through the end of April.

There is no playbook for many of these situations and no answers are set in stone. There is just us, as a Union, doing our best to lead by example. The communities are watching and they are counting on us to do the right thing. Let's continue to show them why the IBEW has and will continue to have the best members in the industry. We are all in this together and by working as one we will succeed.

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The following are some important steps to protect yourself when using National Grid vehicles for day-to-day use and the issues you face when on the job:

1. Do not take for granted that when you park your crew vehicle at the end of your tour of duty that someone else has not been using it or hasn't worked on it. Fleet Maintenance, contractors, or another crew may have had to use it or done maintenance on the vehicle. When you start work the next day, use proper hygiene and wipe down everything you may come in contact with (ex: steering wheel, any cabin controls, handles, etc.)
2. If you have to stop at any time during your day outside of a National Grid facility to fuel or gas up a National Grid vehicle, try and use a dedicated pair of gloves for handling gas and fuel pump, touch pads, and nozzles to minimize any exposure. It's a known fact that service station fueling equipment ranks in the top 10 as the dirtiest things that you can touch.
3. When you enter public businesses or buildings, including National Grid buildings, while on duty, utilize protection when opening doors. When you exit, use your body, arm or elbow to open the door. NYS law dictates all exit doors for structures and public buildings open to the outside.
4. Keep in mind that anything you may purchase in a store can be contaminated. Wipe any packaging after you buy it.
5. SAFETY FIRST- Protect yourself at all times. Take a minute or two to assess what is going on around you or what you are about to do. Maintain social distances.

WORK SAFE! These simple steps will not only protect you, but also protect your crew and your family when you return home

Theodore Skerpon
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Financial Secretary
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