

# The IBEW SPARQ



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## Safety: The “S” in SPARQ

As IBEW members, our commitment to excellence is core to who we are and key to distinguishing ourselves from the competition. You know about our Code of Excellence, and over the course of the next year, we’ll use this quarterly newsletter to talk in a little more detail about what that means.

For us, the Code’s values are embodied in the acronym, SPARQ: Safety, Professionalism, Accountability, Relationships and Quality. Together, these values provide the framework for excellence and guide our approach to every day on the job.

Our first issue focuses on staying safe on the job. The early days of the electrical industry were filled with stories of linemen dying or suffering horrible injuries at work. That’s why our founding fathers banded together to bargain for safer working conditions, and safety remains a core part of our mission today.

### The IBEW awarded 21 members Life-Saving Awards in 2016. Thank you to those members who helped save lives and put safety first.

While members in 2017 work a wider variety of jobs than they did in 1891, for many of us, attention to safety could still be the difference between coming home at the end of the



**“When you do your job right, our employer notices, when you’re the safest and most professional, the customer notices, and when you do both, everyone notices.” *International President Lonnie R. Stephenson***

day or not. It takes constant focus, attention to detail and adherence to workplace rules to ensure we make decisions that prioritize our own safety and the well-being of those around us.

At Local 37 in Fredericton, New Brunswick, safety and excellence are an essential part of the local’s fabric. Last December, after a series of roundtables with members about what the Code meant to members, leadership distributed individual cards and workplace posters promoting the Code of Excellence.

They labeled safety the local’s “number one priority,” and members have taken it to heart. At New Brunswick Power, which employs about 90 per-

cent of Local 37’s members, safety has become so engrained that the company and its IBEW employees were awarded Canada’s Best Health and Safety Culture for 2016.

“Being recognized for our commitment to safety is an enormous honor,” said Business Manager Ross Galbraith. “But the real reward is knowing that we’re looking out for our brothers and sisters on the job and that our culture of safety is preventing injuries. There’s nothing more important than that.”

Keep reading to learn more about how you can make a personal commitment to safety on and off the job.



What does SPARQ mean to you? Have an idea for the newsletter? Email [theSPARQ@ibew.org](mailto:theSPARQ@ibew.org)



## Stay Alert, Speak Up

Your health and safety is the absolute most important part of your job. Staying safe on the shop floor requires careful attention to what's happening around you. Observe rules and procedures and report situations that make you feel unsafe or uncomfortable.

Too often, we hear stories of workers in the manufacturing sector—usually at nonunion plants—who fall victim to shoddy machinery or lack of proper safety policies or equipment. These kinds of accident should never happen at an IBEW-represented facility. We put procedures in place to report unsafe conditions, malfunctioning equipment or managers who ask their employees to engage in potentially risky behavior. It's up to you to report those things and to keep yourself and your union brothers and sisters safe on the job. Your stewards and your local union are



there to make sure you're not punished for speaking up.

But speaking up alone won't make sure you come home in one piece at the end of your shift. Things move fast on a factory floor, and it's up to you to be fully aware of what's going on around you at work. That means coming to work well-rested and alert. It means staying focused on the task at hand. It means looking out for your co-workers as well. Just because you think you "can do your job in your sleep" doesn't mean you should.

Other than your personal protective equipment, your eyes and your voice are the most useful safety tools available to you. Using both on a consistent basis will make work safer for you and for those around you.

## SPARQ GOES LOCAL



When Entergy's Arkansas Nuclear One plant fell to the lowest rating from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Code of Excellence helped the plant return to safety and success.



Chelsea, Mass., Local 1499 and Milwaukee Local 2150 used the Code of Excellence as a selling point to bring overseas business back to the U.S. and increased membership along the way.