



“I have to  
be trained  
... again?”



by **MARK STROMME**  
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Safety Editor

**A**dam is annoyed. “*Come on, I just got training in that six months ago, why do I need to waste my time and go through it again?*”

“Adam, you know we have some new employees on the jobsite,” his supervisor says. “*They need the training and it wouldn’t hurt if you watched the training video again. Actually, maybe you won’t get hurt if you watch the video again.*”

“OK, maybe you’re right,” sighs Adam.

We all know training is important and that OSHA requires it. This is what §1926.21(b)(2) says, “The employer shall

instruct each employee in the recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions ...”

And not just any instruction! You need to provide training *before* the employee is faced with the hazard. You must be proactive, not reactive. Training someone after he/she has been injured defeats the purpose. It’s also necessary to provide ongoing or refresher training as needed. That’s because new hazards are often encountered due to the ever-changing nature of the construction jobsite.

However, the training of construction

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workers shouldn't be a cookie-cutter operation.

Why? There are many reasons, some of which include:

- Generational differences in learning
- Varying levels of experience

Take the training program at Service Electric Co. in Chattanooga, Tennessee for example. Operations and Safety Manager Jerry Smith and Training Coordinator Lloyd Roberts are responsible for training over 30 crews and over 200 journeyman lineworkers, apprentices and equipment operators. Since workers repair and maintain electric lines, they often perform complicated and physically demanding tasks from confined spaces and heights.

*“Safety has to be in the forefront of everything we do,”* says Jerry, *“and it should be the basis for both initial and ongoing training.”*

Jerry and Lloyd are former linemen themselves so they know what training works and what doesn't. They require workers to be trained in a variety of areas, including confined spaces, fall protection and forklift training ... in the classroom and on-site. And their trainees reflect a variety of ages and experience

levels, which adds a unique challenge to their programs.

Younger workers learn in a different way than older workers. For example, employees born between 1965 and 1980 (known as the “Xers”) are informal, skeptical, their approach to authority is casual, and they're the first group to grow up technologically educated. The standard lecture-type training may not work well for them. Xers often prefer a more interactive type of training.

Compare the Xers with Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964. They believe in personal gratification, health and wellness, personal growth, and involvement. The traditional lecture-type learning may work just fine for them, since that's how many of them were taught in school.

Also, employees with varying levels of construction experience learn at unequal rates. A new worker with just a few months of experience is going to react to training differently

than the 20-year veteran.

*“We hire people who have worked for other companies where they might not have been trained properly, and we don't want them to pass bad habits on to our team,”* Jerry



**Jerry Smith of Service Electric Co. encourages his trainees to keep training handouts, pocketbooks and handbooks with them as a convenient resource for questions at work.**



**Service Electric combines classroom instruction with hands-on training like the confined space rescue drill shown here.**

**“The goal of all our training is to make sure that employees leave work the same way they arrived – safe and sound.”**

**Lloyd Roberts  
Safety & Training Coordinator  
Service Electric Co.**



**Training Coordinator Lloyd Roberts follows up a J. J. Keller video with a quiz to test his trainees' comprehension.**

**“Our culture embraces safety training, and management and customers support it. Our employees recognize the importance of initial and ongoing training.”**

observes. *“Industry regulations and practices have changed. From a safety standpoint, it can be hard for the more experienced workers to understand why we teach a procedure differently if the old way still works. Many older employees prefer to learn things through practical application and are hesitant to try different methods.”*

### **Give'em something**

It's not only important to vary the training, it's also important to supply the trainees with material to take with them after training.

Handbooks, skill cards, and handouts can all help the employee remember the important points. Plus, the employee can take them along after the training session. That way, if a question comes up, the employee can refer to the material for clarification.

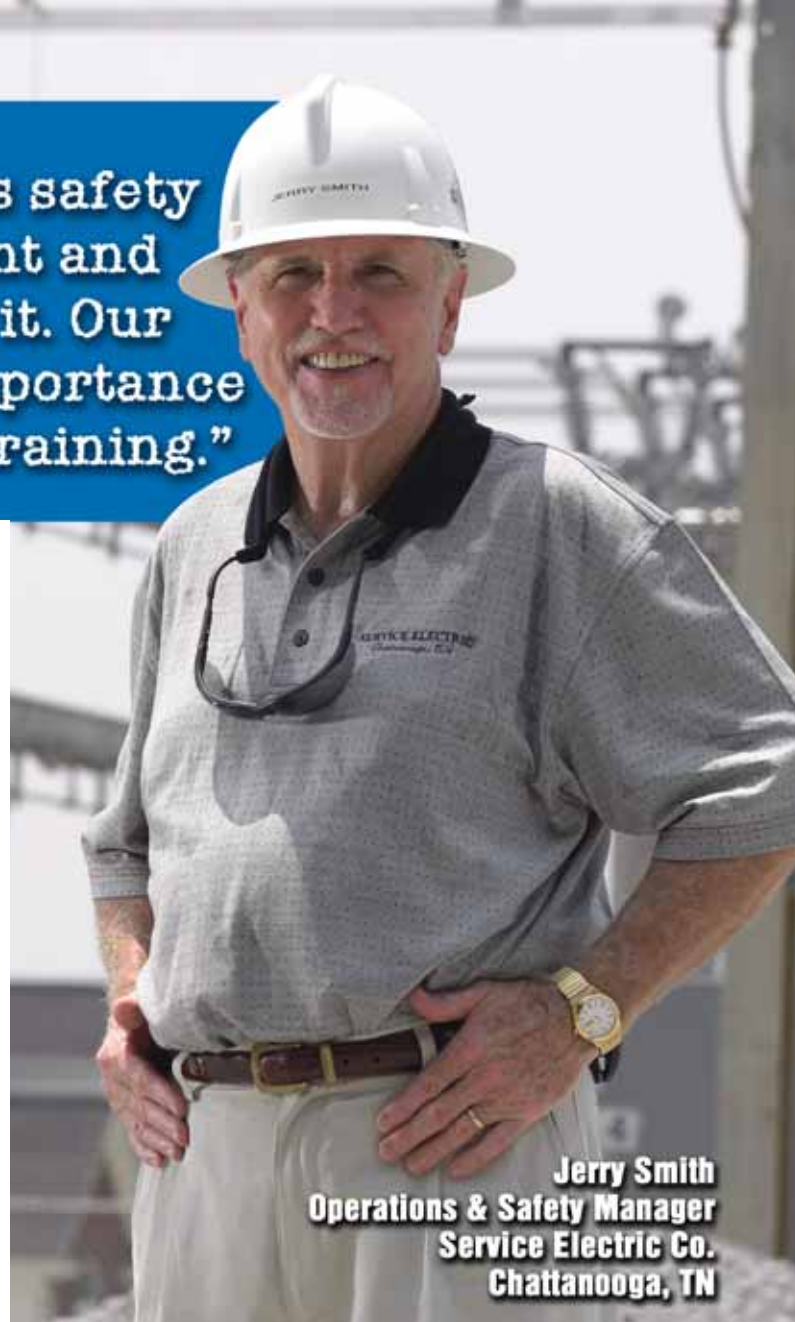
For example, giving the trainees a handbook can reinforce the training and serve as a reference if they have questions.

*“The supplemental materials that come with J. J. Keller training products help increase the impact of our presentations,”* Lloyd agrees. *“They give our workers something handy to refer back to. I see our foremen using them, and our workers reading them on breaks and keeping them in their cars. Plus, the materials come with tear-off receipts so that we can document the training in workers' files.”*

### **Training and ROI**

Training isn't only important for safety ... it also helps in maintaining employee morale and is a great return on investment. A safe workplace is a real draw for new employees and acts as an anchor to keep current employees in place. People want to work for a company that values the safety of its employees. And like Service Electric, you can count on J. J. Keller training products to help you do your most important job: making sure that employees leave work, as Lloyd says, *“the same way they arrived — safe and sound.”*

Have your own success story with J. J. Keller?  
Visit [www.jjkeller.com/story](http://www.jjkeller.com/story) and tell us about it!



**Jerry Smith**  
**Operations & Safety Manager**  
**Service Electric Co.**  
**Chattanooga, TN**

**“J. J. Keller training programs come ready to go, so I don't have to spend 10-12 hours per topic building my own.”**

**Jerry Smith**



**Jerry's successful training program includes these J. J. Keller products:**



**Fall Protection  
For Construction**



**Back Safety:  
A User's Guide**



**Confined Spaces:  
A Training Program  
For Employees**



**Forklift Safety  
For Construction**