

## ADVICE TO APPRENTICES

Following are tidbits of advice gathered from experienced Journeymen. Following them is no guarantee to success but not following them is a guarantee of failure. Most of them seem like common sense, but they would not be on this list if a lot of Apprentices and Journeymen did not follow them.

### PERSONAL

- 1. Save Money** – Construction is often working yourself out of a job. When the job is over, you are unemployed. First, live within or below your means. Second, save money so that you can get through periods of unemployment. As a rule of thumb, have enough in savings to get by for six months.
- 2. If You Have a Criminal Record, Get It Expunged** – If you have a criminal record you may be denied the ability to work at Intel or at a job in a school or at the airport because of that record.
- 3. Sick** – Don't go to work sick; you will make others sick. Also, you become more likely to hurt yourself or others around you. (If you are off work for more than two days you may need a doctor's excuse.)
- 4. Appearance** – Always maintain a professional appearance. Look like a professional no matter where you go to work.
- 5. Child Support** – Stay current. The state or your ex can garnish your paycheck; the state can subpoena the union to find out where you are working.
- 6. Learn to Say No** – Everyone uses electricity and everyone has projects they would like to have you help with. Unless it is for your mother, do not do it. It is a violation of the Constitution and several state laws to do side jobs. If you want to do a volunteer job for your church, see the Business Manager.
- 7. Find a Mentor** – You need someone to talk to, preferably a late-term apprentice.
- 8. Develop a Thick Skin** – Whether it is criticism over your work or just the way they talk to you, you need to be able to handle the way people talk to you on the job.
- 9. Take Care of Yourself** – Stay in good health; eat and sleep right; take advantage of wellness exams.

### EDUCATION

- 10. Do Well in School** – Study hard; follow the rules. If you need help, get a tutor. (Do not wait until there is a problem to get help.)

- 11. Make Friends/Network** – These are the Brothers and Sisters you are going to be working with for the rest of your career. These are the people who are going to become Foremen, General Foremen, and Project Managers.
- 12. Continuing Education** – Don't only take the classes you need to take to keep your license, take other classes that are offered to make you a more valuable employee. (Classes are at the Training Center, on-line, or at IBEW websites.)
- 13. Take Advantage of Every Opportunity** – This includes not only how to become a better wireman, but also to become more valuable if you become a signing supervisor or develop skills as an estimator or become certified as a welder. Get certified for OSHA 30; many employers want that.

## ON THE JOB

- 14. Keep Perspective** – Try not to get overwhelmed.
- 15. Save Your Paycheck Stubs** – They can come in handy for many reasons. If your employer does not pay fringes, you can use this to prove hours worked to get credit for health care, or to question improper deductions, or not getting paid the correct number of hours.
- 16. Keep a Job Diary** – Every day, on every job, keep a record of where you worked and how many hours you worked especially if you travel. Sometimes questions come up about where you were or what you did or who you worked with. There is nothing like a job diary that you create to make sure there is no question.
- 17. Do Not Take Scrap Copper from the Job Site** – Unless your employer says it is okay, even if “everyone else does it.”
- 18. Do Not Create Your Own Personal Set of Tools with Tools from Your Employer** – Even if “everyone else does it.” It is theft and not only will you lose your job but you might get arrested.
- 19. Do Not Use Your Employers Truck or Tools or Supplies to Do Side Jobs** –
- 20. Develop Good Work Skills and Attitude:**
  - a. Show up on time;
  - b. Work hard – physically and mentally;
  - c. **Have a good attitude** (If you have a bad morning, re-set yourself over lunch);
  - d. Develop and learn varied skills;
  - e. Give your employer more than they expect;
  - f. Don't promise more than you can deliver.

**21. Questions** – If you have any questions, ask the Training Center or your steward or apprentice rep. It is okay to have questions. Ask your Journeyman. Remember that the Journeyman laying you out may never have done this before.

**22. Problems** – If you think you have a problem or that your rights have been violated, find out! Ask questions to find out if you are right and what you should do. If you don't tell someone you have a problem, no one will be able to help you fix it.

**23. Get Licensed in Both Oregon and Washington** – You are expected to be able to work anywhere in the jurisdiction.

**24. Safety – Always Work Safe.** Don't do something you will regret later. Never let a co-worker or an employer or your own laziness cause you to work unsafe. (Common example – standing on top of the ladder rather than going and getting one that is the proper height.)

**25. Unemployment –**

a. Always tell the truth;

b. If you ask for an ROF, unemployment will consider that a quit and your unemployment will be denied.

**26. Read the Collective Bargaining Agreement** – Do not rely on others to tell you what it says.

**27. ERTS** – If you travel and work outside the jurisdiction, sign up to be on the IBEW/NECA Electronic Reciprocal Transfer System (ERTS) to have your benefits reciprocated to Local 48.

**28. DO NOT!** – When you are on the job do not:

a. Drink alcohol

b. Use illegal drugs

c. Fight

d. Steal

e. Be insubordinate

If your foreman tells you to do something you do not want to do, the rule is work now – grieve later – unless what you are being asked to do is patently unsafe.

## **BEING IN THE UNION**

**29. Attend Union Meetings/Get Involved** – Your Union is only as strong as you make it. There are lots of volunteer opportunities (Volunteer Organizing Committee; Habitat for Humanity; the Grotto; Sausage Festival; Sisters of the Road Café, etc). It doesn't matter what you do, just get involved.

**30. Dues** – Keep your dues current. If you don't pay your dues, you don't work.

**31. Keep Your Information Current** – It is up to you to let the Union, Training Center, and benefit providers (i.e., A & I Benefits, pensions, etc.) know your current address and telephone numbers.

**32. Help** – Help your Brothers and Sisters who are in need.

**33. Don't Complain unless You Let Your Complaint Be Known**

## **SCHOOL AND WORK**

**34. Success at Both Is Required** – You cannot do one without the other.