



AWEA Wind Power Value Chain

AWEA hosts an annual workshop focusing on safety issues most pertinent to the wind industry. The workshop is usually held in the fall and provides innovative and effective strategies to ensure worker safety. The workshop fosters continued communication aimed at providing a safe work environment.

AWEA has a Safety Committee open to AWEA Business Members at the "Corporate/Utility 1" level and above. The AWEA Safety Committee will aggregate the robust safety procedures used by owners and operators of wind projects and will produce a set of uniform guidelines for adoption by all industry members.

Members may log in to the Safety Committee eCommunity through the Member Center, Member Login link at www.AWEA.org.

For more information, contact Michele Myers, AWEA Safety Committee Liaison
mmyers@awea.org
202.383.2500 ext. 583



Safety in the Wind Industry

Numerous tasks in the construction, operation and maintenance of a wind turbine require strict safety guidelines and well-designed equipment. A wind technician may be required to work in a space the size of a bathroom sitting on an 80-meter tower the size of an elevator shaft 20 stories tall (though they may not have service lifts), with massive mechanical and high voltage electrical equipment filling much of the space, many miles from the closest town, at a site exposed to some of the strongest winds – and harsh weather – around. A technician may be required to inspect the front hub and blades of the turbine – from the small space inside, or, in some cases, while being suspended along the blade on the outside. And that's just the job of the operation and maintenance technician. The construction crew had to work at the same site first, erecting the tower, turbine and rotor using some of the tallest mobile cranes in the crane industry, as well as installing underground electrical lines and access roads across harsh terrain. The foundation may require excavating a column 2 ½ stories deep, adding to safety challenges.

Strategies for Safety

Wind turbine owners and operators know that the turbine is most productive if it is kept in top condition, producing the optimum amount of electricity for a long time, with minimal down time due to mistakes or accidents. The safety professional contributes to that objective through diligent safety training for technicians, selection of functional and effective safety equipment, and strict enforcement of safety practices.

Safety equipment and practices benefit from decades of experience in the modern wind industry installing and maintaining over 200,000 wind turbines. Further, many safety devices and practices may be imported directly from other, even longer-established industries. For example, safety equipment complies with national and international codes and standards, and electrical

and fire safety practices are built around established industry guidelines. As the wind industry is clearly an international industry – with turbines and components regularly crisscrossing between countries depending on the country of origin and the market being served – safety standards also are impacted by safety requirements of multiple countries. The wind industry is working diligently to harmonize those standards so that equipment manufactured in any country will meet minimum safety standards anywhere.

The work conditions that require attention to safe practices may also present a challenge in providing assistance to a sick or injured worker. Providing medical assistance to a worker or removing them from tight places and transporting them to the ground for assistance may require safety equipment designs and strategies that have been specifically developed for the wind industry.

Wind technicians receive extensive training prior to working in the field, either from the multiple technical training programs available in technical colleges across the U.S. or from company-run safety training programs. The industry is collecting safety practices used by wind operators around the world and developing a set of harmonized safe practices that may then be used to form the basis of safety training programs.

Safety Assurance

Worker safety regulators – at the local, state and federal level – also have a responsibility to ensure worker safety. The working conditions required for turbine construction and maintenance may be quite unfamiliar to the traditional safety regulator, and their traditional approach to risky work environments may actually increase exposure to hazards in the wind industry. A major objective of the wind industry is to provide detailed information about wind turbines and their service requirements to regulators, then to develop safety regulations that reinforce the most effective safety practices in the field.

Safety Goal

Wind energy is expanding with opportunities for wind technicians. However, it also presents a challenge to ensure 100% worker safety. The goal is to ensure that every person in the wind industry – from technician to field supervisor to developer – makes it home safely every night.