Partnership for Electrical Safety

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OSHA Special Guest Joins PES' Scott Margolin to Address Arc Flash Hazards at National Safety Congress

ORLANDO, FL (September 17, 2024) – Partnership for Electrical Safety (PES) Chairman Scott Margolin addressed a standing-room only crowd of electrical and industrial safety experts at the 2024 National Safety Congress. During his presentation, Margolin was joined by David Chicca, Director of OSHA's Office of Engineering Safety to announce imminent OSHA action on arc flash workplace safety guidance. Updated guidance is expected to be published within a month – the first OSHA arc flash guidance update in almost 20 years.

PES spent years gathering data to better understand the root causes of ongoing arc flash injuries and fatalities, working closely with OSHA, labor organizations, and a bipartisan coalition of Members of Congress and Senators to translate these learnings into meaningful actions to protect American workers. OSHA focus areas include what qualifies as de-energized work. As much as 90% of what is claimed as de-energized does not meet the definition of either OSHA's Lock Out Tag Out (LOTO) or NFPA 70E's Electrically Safe Work Condition (ESWC); further, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required for all steps of de-energization and re-energization. The other major issue is people choosing to work energized without an energized work permit or the appropriate PPE; this is the leading cause of arc flash injuries today.

PES Chairman Scott Margolin states, "This new guidance is a game-changer and could not have come at more opportune time; in addition to the hundreds of thousands of electricians currently being asked to work without life-saving PPE, we're at an inflection point. Our country is investing in renewing the grid, EVs and DC chargers, the electrification of America, and recently made NFPA 70B (maintenance of electrical gear) a standard. This is fantastic progress, but it will also put far more workers in harm's way, more often, many of whom will have less training, experience, and PPE… leading inevitably to more arc flashes, injuries, and fatalities. It was absolutely imperative to take action to clarify requirements and improve safety now, and we applaud both the commitment to act and the urgency."