



# International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Vancouver Island

Quarterly Newsletter Since 1902

## Introducing the BuildStrong App



We're pleased to announce the BuildStrong app is live! This is a confidential and user-friendly tool built to help tackle mental health and substance use challenges.

### Alcohol and Substance Use in the Construction Industry in a Nutshell

Substance use in the trades is not a new issue, and unfortunately, construction workers are disproportionately impacted by substance and opioid-related deaths. Workers have unique vulnerabilities characterized by a dangerous workplace and complicated work culture. These deaths are often due to a very complex mix of pain management, job insecurity, and feeling like there is nowhere else to turn. Injury especially puts a lot of pressure on workers because we're either working hurt, or not working at all. And for many of us, no work means no pay cheque, which is just simply not an option. On top of that, work culture can promote bad habits with the "work hard play hard" attitude. What starts out as a beer after work can lead to alcohol dependency or illicit drugs. And to make matters worse, workers feel like they can't openly talk about substance use for fear of losing their job or face reprimand.

### Buildstrong App Features

The app is a powerful tool giving you instant access to resources such as help lines, self-assessment tests, education, and more. The help lines are immediate phone connections to crisis support, suicide support, medical support, and

CIRP support. The self-assessment tests are easy to undertake and can help you identify if you or someone you know are displaying patterns or signs/symptoms of concern. The App also has the "Alone Timer" designed to sound an alarm to paramedics if you are not able to use safely. This timer could be lifesaving by helping paramedics reach you in case something goes wrong during your use. We are already seeing hundreds of users implement the Alone Timer.

There are educational materials for managing stress, overcoming substance use challenges, and info about support services. In fact, you can request CIRP services directly through the app such as Counselling, Recovery Groups, Workshops on Substance Use & Related Mental Health Issues, etc. The app is not just for those who are struggling. With just a few clicks, you can request various types of training including substance use and mental health awareness, prevention and promotion training, and lots more.

The app empowers members and their families by putting help directly in their hands. A Fraser Health study found that construction workers generally have poor awareness around what treatment programs are available for workers and how to access them. So please, as the reader, talk to your fellow IBEW members about the BuildStrong App. Raise awareness for support services and prioritize the well-being of construction workers.

The services cater to all members, including women, Indigenous communities, minorities and LGBTQ2S individuals. In addition, it significantly increases access to resources for workers who are in remote locations, or who are unable to access services as easily.

To register in the app is simple!

All you need is your Local Union Number (230) and your email.

CIRP services are available to all unionized construction workers **AND** their families.

## Volume 4: 2023

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### **Member's Dues Auto-Deposit**

To send dues payment via e-Transfer, email [dues@ibew230.org](mailto:dues@ibew230.org)

Remember to include your name and IBEW \*card number in the e-Transfer "message" section

\*Note: your card number is printed on your yellow dues receipt

### **News and Notes**

We are pleased to announce our office doors are open to the public. Thank you all for your patience during the last three years.

Unit Meetings are back and held in-person. Please check our Facebook page for updates!

### **Business Hours**

Our main office and training centre will be closed noon December 22, 2023 - January 2, 2024.

We wish everyone a happy and safe holiday!

### **Upcoming Training**

9-10 Dec	Residential Wiring	Nanaimo
9 Dec	EV Supply Equipment	Victoria
10 Dec	EV Supply Equipment	Victoria
27-28 Jan	Data/Low Voltage	Victoria

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# Business Manager's Report



**Phil Venoit**  
**Business Manager/Financial Secretary**

I had the opportunity to meet with Pierre Poilievre, leader of the Federal Conservative Party of Canada. After he gave his, I'm an average Canadian with your best interests in mind speech, I reminded him of his voting record on the anti-union bills of C-377 and C-525, and anti-worker bill C-38, that attacked all construction workers by those having to use the Employment Insurance seasonal or cyclical like construction workers, who would be deemed "repeat offenders" and would see their EI cheques reduced each year you filed a new claim.

He is hoping we will all forget his voting record and efforts to push unions and worker's rights back to the 1800's. This is no joke. He is a very real threat to our collective standard of work and life, and we should all be fighting like hell to keep him from power over our union and standard of living.

You may dislike Justin Trudeau and the federal Liberals because your billionaire-owned Twit & FB feed tells you they are a bad choice, BUT the Federal Liberals banned asbestos imports and exports in our country, saving construction lives going forward, repealed those anti-union bills of C-377 and C-525, and most of Bill C-38 restoring Employment Insurance for the workers it was previously intended to cover.

They have provided the IBEW Training Centre's across Canada, and our Local 230 Training Centre with millions of dollars in training related money over the last 5 years. If you are a WATT graduate, Justin Trudeau made your apprenticeship and your pathway to financial security through a career as a construction electrician possible.

These are the hard cold facts, not political bullshit intended to sway your vote.

And, the Federal Liberals have agreed to introduce No scab legislation in the event of a federal strike. This is a long time coming, which we will never get with the federal Conservative Party and Pierre Poilievre in power.

At this year's BC Building Trades 51st Convention held in Victoria, we received a Heavy Industry update from panelists Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure, Luke Schauerte, LNG Canada, and Boyd Mason, BC Hydro collectively representing about \$50 billion worth of ongoing and upcoming construction work in BC.

The United Nations declared all people should have access to clean drinking water and sanitation in 2010. I was elated to receive the announcement directly from BC's Premier on the requirement to provide flush toilets on all construction projects with over 25 workers on site.

Construction sanitation has been front and centre since the onset of COVID-19 and the concern of the spreading pandemic. For far too long construction has been looked down upon as a poor cousin to white collar work, this is one reason that no longer exists in BC creating that perception.

This is a big humanitarian win for ALL construction workers in BC, and, although when I first started talking about this issue in the second week of March of 2020, many doubted we could get this done, an enormous shout out to Brynn at the BC Building Trades, and all those who joined me on never backing down an inch on this issue.

We stood on the moral high ground on this one and there was no way we were backing down from our position. And that was, prove to us on every project it is NOT possible to put in flush toilets whether they are connected to a sewer line or stored in a secondary holding tank, lit, heated, ventilated, with a schedule of cleaning and pumping compatible with the crew size. With the Premier's announcement the entire construction industry has been put on notice to start outfitting their construction sites with flush toilets.

This year's corresponding Building Trades Lobbying efforts focused on;

1. Proper fitting PPE, for all shapes and sizes. PPE is supposed to keep our members from harm, not be the cause of

that harm. And when your PPE doesn't fit like it should, the PPE becomes the safety hazard.

2. Better funding for apprenticeships. Over twenty years ago we had 18,000 apprentices in the system in BC. Today we have 43,000 while the funding has not kept in line with the number of new apprentices and we need the number of butts in seats to directly correspond to the hands on the tools, otherwise we are bottlenecking the technical training and limiting career opportunities for our youth.

3. The construction industry and trades in general are ill-proportionate to the balance of society in substance abuse and addiction. It is so bad, we've recognized that for decades and developed our own institutional solutions through the Construction Industry Rehabilitation Plan, without any government funding, while our taxes go to funding government programs. We need government to begin funding our CIRP like any other organization, so we can offset the costs of providing this service to our own members.

Our Wage Grievance on the Cowichan Hospital has paid back dividends. Arbitrator Vince Ready handed us a great decision covering off the next two years of the wage increases on AIRCC projects including the Cowichan hospital that will put this project slightly ahead of our standard construction agreement.

We will also be going to Arbitration likely in the New Year against Houle Electric, as they have decided to not pay Travel on the Cowichan Hospital project. Over 60 contractors have worked under the same language all paying daily travel to and from the job.

I had the opportunity to meet with the President of the Treasury Board of Canada Anita Anand, to discuss the grievances filed by our members at the Fleet Maintenance Facility Dockyard concerning the PSAC strike, to get a few important points related to our members held out from work.

I've been appointed to the Dockyard Trades and Labour Council Liaison Committee. We had 3 days of bargaining last month and made some good ground, this is only the second round and Treasury Board is attempting to negotiate the 3 Ship Repair Groups on both coasts all at once. So, our next dates will likely not be until February.

Finally, from my family to yours, I wish you all a Happy Holiday, and a prosperous New Year!



# Update from our Pension Consultant, Richard Hughes

## An Update from your Friendly Neighborhood Pension Consultant

As we roll into 2024, there are several updates that you might want to consider in your financial plan. With these updates coming your way, why not get a jump start on 2024 and book a complimentary meeting with your financial planner? See the link at the end of this update.

## More Tax-Free Savings Room for 2024

The Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) contribution limit for the year 2024 has been set at \$7,000. This is an increase from the 2023 limit of \$6,500, marking the first time that the TFSA annual contribution limit will rise in consecutive years.

For individuals who have been eligible for the TFSA since its inception in 2009 and have never contributed, the total contribution room available in 2024 will amount to \$95,000. This cumulative limit factors in the annual increments since the TFSA was introduced.

## Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Contributions Will Increase in 2024

To help enhance the long-term benefits of the Canada Pension Plan, "CPP 2" has been introduced for additional contributions at higher earnings. Here's a snapshot for 2024:

**1. Contribution Rates:** The contribution rates for employees and employers will remain at 5.95%, and the maximum contribution will be \$3,867.50 each.

**2. Maximum Pensionable Earnings (MPE):** The MPE under the CPP will increase from \$66,600 in 2023 to \$68,500 in 2024. This is the first ceiling up to which CPP contributions are mandatory.

**3. Additional Contribution Rate for Higher Earnings:** For pensionable earnings above \$68,500 and below \$73,200, a new CPP contribution rate will be applied. This rate will be 4.0% for both employees and employers. At the maximum contribution rate for "CPP 2", this will be an additional contribution of \$188 for both employees and employers.

## Financial Planners Are Waiting for You

Did you know comprehensive, personal financial advice is included as part of the IBEW Local 230 Pension and Retirement Plan?

Having an expert at your side managing your money can go a long way. Manulife offers complimentary planning sessions with qualified, salaried financial planners so you can get the guidance you need. Go online to [www.cbpp.ca/planright](http://www.cbpp.ca/planright) to book a session today!

**Richard Hughes, CFP**  
**Co-Founder**  
**CBPP**



## Ideal Apprentice Competition

On September 26th, Local 230 hosted the electrical manufacturing company, Ideal Industries National Apprentice Competition held at the Local 230 Training Centre.

Many of our late term apprentices answered the call and came out to compete. There were prizes and swag for all those who competed.

Thanks to all our competitors and congratulations to Brother Anton H. (from Houle Electric), And Sisters Alex R. (from Thomis Electric) and Desiree B. (from ARRM Electric) for taking 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, respectively.

And a big shout out to Ideal Industries and Judge Taylor for making this great event happen!



Left to right: Anton H., Judge Taylor, Alex R., Desiree B.



# Congratulations to our new Red Seal Electricians!



**Top-left:** Jarod M., Trevor O.

**Middle-left:** James M., Ginger H., Joshua I.

**Bottom-left:** James H., Nicholas S., Justin B.