



Why a NECA Contractor Is the Right Decision

A Customer's Guide

When you hire an electrical contractor, you're not just buying wire and labor. You're buying execution, accountability, and risk management. A NECA member contractor brings all three backed by the resources of the largest electrical contracting association in the world.

Being union and being a NECA member are not the same thing. What separates a NECA contractor isn't just who employs the workers. It's what the contractor itself brings to your project.



Workforce You Can Count On

The IBEW Partnership Advantage and What It Actually Requires

NECA contractors work under collective bargaining agreements negotiated with the IBEW — the most skilled electrical workforce in the country. But so do other union contractors. The difference is that NECA contractors don't just sign those agreements. They help shape them at the table, fund the training infrastructure behind them, and are accountable to a national framework for how that workforce is developed and deployed.

- Apprentices train through Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees (JATCs) that NECA co-governs and co-funds, completing thousands of hours of hands-on and classroom instruction before ever touching your project unsupervised
- Journeymen Wireman and Journeyman Lineman are credentialed, continuously trained, and subject to standardized competency requirements
- NECA contractors participate in national workforce development initiatives that non-member union firms simply don't have access to
- The NECA-IBEW partnership means predictable labor relations, not just a signed CBA, but an active, managed relationship with dispute resolution infrastructure behind it
- Workforce pipeline is managed nationally, meaning your contractor can scale up for large or accelerating projects in ways a standalone signatory firm often cannot

Other union contractors employ IBEW members. NECA contractors helped build the system that trained them. There's a difference between signing the agreement and owning a stake in what makes it work.



Safety That Protects Your Project — and Your Liability

Industry-Leading Safety Infrastructure

Workplace incidents cost owners. They delay schedules, trigger insurance claims, invite OSHA scrutiny, and can expose you to third-party liability.

A union card doesn't equal a safety program. Non-NECA union contractors may have competent workers but lack the institutional safety infrastructure that NECA membership provides.

NECA contractors have access to:

- Current NECA safety training videos, publications, and mobile tools that are continuously updated
- Regulatory guidance updated in real time as OSHA rules change
- A nationally recognized safety culture reinforced at every level, from apprentice to foreman to owner
- Codes and standards expertise that informs safe installation practices, not just safe jobsite behavior



Technical Standards Built to Last, Not Just to Pass Inspection

National Electrical Installation Standards (NEIS)

NECA leads development of the *National Electrical Installation Standards*, the industry benchmark for quality workmanship. These aren't minimum code compliance thresholds. They define what a quality installation actually looks like.

This is an area where non-NECA union contractors often fall short in ways that aren't visible at bid time:

- NECA contractors are trained to NEIS standards, not just the NEC minimums
- Technical guidance is continuously updated as technology, materials, and code evolve
- A non-NECA contractor, even a reputable union shop, typically doesn't have access to this standards development process or the training tools built around it
- Your installation is built to perform for decades, not just to pass the walk-through

Code compliance is the floor. NEIS is the ceiling. NECA contractors build to the ceiling. Most others, union included, are building to the floor.



Project Management and Business Sophistication

A Better-Run Company Runs a Better Project

This is where the gap between NECA members and other union contractors becomes most visible on complex projects. Being a good signatory employer doesn't make you a sophisticated project management firm.

NECA provides member contractors with structured education through the NECA Learning Center, covering:

- Estimating and project management, including a DOL registered project management apprenticeship
- Field leadership and foreman development
- Business operations and financial management
- HR, communication, and risk management
- Better-managed contractors produce more accurate bids — reducing change order exposure for you

Better field leadership means fewer RFIs, fewer errors, faster closeout. Better business operations means the company will still be in business when you need warranty work. A contractor who invests in their people manages your project better. NECA makes that investment systematic.



Advocacy That Shapes the Regulatory Environment You Operate In

A Seat at the Table in Washington

NECA is the electrical construction industry's voice on Capitol Hill, monitoring and influencing legislation, regulatory agency rulemaking, and federal policy that affects every project you build.

Non-NECA union contractors benefit passively from this advocacy without contributing to it or staying connected to its outputs.

- Prevailing wage compliance guidance protects you on public projects
- Davis-Bacon expertise means NECA contractors know how to navigate federally funded work correctly, reducing your audit and compliance risk
- Regulatory monitoring means your contractor isn't caught off guard by code changes or new agency requirements mid-project
- NECA contractors are plugged into the regulatory conversation. Non-NECA contractors, even union ones, are often reading about it after the fact

When the rules change a NECA contractor knows about it first and is already adapting. That protection flows downstream to your project.



Industry Connection = Problem-Solving Power

Access to a National Network

Being a union contractor connects a firm to its local. Being a NECA member connects a firm to the entire industry.

NECA's network includes thousands of contractors across the U.S. and North America, connected through:

- Local chapters and regional organizations
- The NECA Network online member community
- National conventions and trade events
- The MEP Innovation Conference, connecting electrical contractors with innovators across all skilled trades

When a NECA contractor hits a challenge on your project, an unusual specification, a supply chain issue, a technical problem outside their day-to-day experience, they have a national community to call.

You're not hiring one contractor. You're hiring a contractor connected to an entire industry. That network shows up when your project gets complicated.



Accountability Built Into the Model

What Membership Signals

NECA membership is not automatic, and it's not just a dues payment. It reflects a contractor's active commitment to:

- Operating under a managed, accountable labor relations framework, not just signing a CBA and going it alone
- Meeting industry training and workforce standards
- Participating in and contributing to the broader industry infrastructure that benefits you as an owner

A non-NECA union contractor may do excellent work. But they've opted out of the system that drives continuous improvement, standardization, and accountability across the industry. That's a choice worth understanding before you award a contract.



1201 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 1200 • Washington, D.C. 20004
202-991-6300 • www.necanet.org