

ON THE GRID

VPP Power Generation



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Dave Smith at WIN Waste Innovations

SAFETY PLUS *SYMPOSIUM 2021*

"I had the pleasure of attending the Safety Plus Symposium in Nashville in August/September 2021. I've been attending VPPPA conferences since 2003 and have seen the growth of the VPPPA.

This year marked a return to the in person conference, although, in keeping with the times, there was a virtual option available. Onsite attendance was pretty low (less than 1,000 people), but there was a robust presence through the virtual option.

The breakout sessions were better than in the past. I chose to focus on employee engagement and continuous improvement sessions and was not disappointed. One of the sessions I attended was on the new self evaluation electronic platform that is free to the members of VPPPA. The VPPonline platform simplifies the annual Self Evaluation process by standardization, collaboration and automation. Your rates will automatically be calculated and the system allows for all members of your self evaluation team to add their information through the platform. This should be available in December 2021. Just in time for self evaluation season!

The Power Generation Workgroup breakout session was well attended. I missed having Alex Miller as a co-presenter, but I know he attended virtually. We had members of the group attend the session and have had a number of people contact us to join our next meeting (which is November 19). Our group is growing in a contained manner and I think it still provides us the best way to navigate VPP and other issues prevalent to our industry.

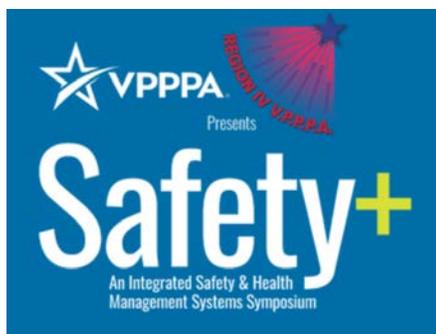
Unfortunately, our meet and greet was not well attended and I have talked to the national VPPPA office about ways to make sure people know the meeting exists and better ways to promote it within our industry.

I met with several OSHA reps at the conference about our group and even had a brief conversation with James Frederick, who is the Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor. He wanted to know more about the group. Our OSHA reps who regularly sit in on our meetings continue to promote the group in their regions.



Overall, the conference was a success. I was happy to see people I haven't seen for a couple of years and I hope that the leadership of the organization can right the ship, so to speak. We need to support the organization through our memberships and willingness to present at conferences. We can't lose this organization to the economics of COVID. It is too important to all of us to maintain the network that the VPPPA offers us. We need them as much as they need us."

Kelli Heflin, SMS
Manager, Safety & ESG Coordinator
Onward Energy



Company Spotlight

NorthWestern
Energy



Thompson Falls HES resides in the North West corner of Montana in the quite town of, you guessed it, Thompson Falls. The site covers approximately 400 acres and is located on the largest river system in Montana, the Clark Fork River. The site consists of two powerhouses, the “old house”, which has six vertical Francis turbine driven generators totaling 44 MW and “Number 7”, which houses a single Kaplan turbine driven generator with 55 MW output. There are two dams, the 1000 foot main channel, and the 450 foot dry channel (“overflow” dam), an island, “power park”, and an abundance of other public accessible areas.

The two powerhouse’s combined are capable of generating approximately 99 Megawatts.

The Thompson Falls crew started their VPP journey with the application submittal in 2009. Since their initial approval as a STAR site in 2011, they have proven to be leaders in safety, both within hydro and NorthWestern Energy as a whole. The crew strives for excellence through continuous improvement. The group also meets annually to establish goals and prioritize the completion.



Thompson Falls continuous improvement goals include improved site safety inspections, installation of work platforms and access ramps to remove fall hazards and prevent working from ladders. Additionally, extensive lighting upgrades on both powerhouses and the dams as well as unit grounding capability improvements for electrical safety have been completed.

In addition to being confirmed for STAR recertification on September 23, 2021, Thompson Falls was honored with the VPP decade of excellence award earlier this year. To the crew at Thompson Falls, VPP isn't just a program, but a legacy of excellence that can be passed down from generation to generation. The pride for their site and participation in VPP is evident from the moment you walk in the door to the moment you leave, employee engagement and ownership is clearly demonstrated.

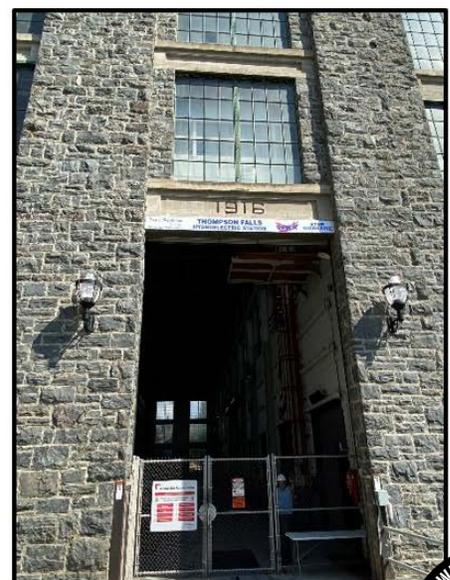
Please enjoy a video tour that was created for the recent hybrid recertification at Thompson Falls.

Thompson Falls Dam - YouTube

90 day item (swing gate is located at the top of the access):
Installed handrail for access and a cover to prevent accidental fall if working in the turbine pit area – crafted in houses



Entry to the old house





Safety Share

ELECTRICITY

Many times we tend to take electricity for granted and can be too dependent on it at times. How many items in our daily life require electricity of some form to function? How often do we make plans to get by and survive for short periods of time without electricity? There are resources we can use to make our life easier to cope during these difficult times, but they present several hazards of their own as well. Let's discuss generators for the home and the many different hazards they can present if not used correctly.

GENERATOR SAFETY

A generator is a machine that turns mechanical energy into electrical energy. It provides electricity to devices and appliances when you are not connected to the power grid. Generators are important safety equipment during natural disasters such as hurricanes and snowstorms or during any power outage. Having a home generator will allow you to keep on lights, important appliances, essential medical equipment and your home's heat. If you live in an area that gets frequent but short outages, a generator can ease the inconvenience and ensure your day is never interrupted by an unexpected blackout.





BE PREPARED

When the electricity goes out is not the time to start looking/planning for a generator!

Example: Texas Winter Storm 2021

- Do some research and decide what your needs are in an emergency. What size generator do you need to meet your minimum necessities? What appliances, electronics, equipment, etc. are necessary during an outage.
- Install a transfer switch before its needed. This critical connection will cost from \$500 to \$900 with labor for a 5,000-rated-watt or larger generator. A transfer switch connects the generator to your circuit panel and lets you power hardwired appliances while avoiding the glaring safety risk of using extension cords.
- Don't attempt to backfeed your house. Backfeeding means trying to power your home's wiring by plugging the generator into a wall outlet. This reckless and dangerous practice presents an electrocution risk to utility workers and neighbors served by the same utility transformer. It also bypasses some of the built-in household circuit protection devices, so you could end up frying some of your electronics or starting an electrical fire.

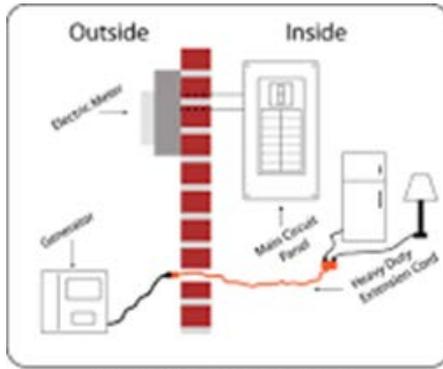
GENERATOR BACKFEED CORD “SUICIDE CORD”

Backfeeding is the tying of a portable generator directly to your home's electrical panel instead of using a transfer switch. It is dangerous. It is illegal. And it should never be attempted under any circumstance.

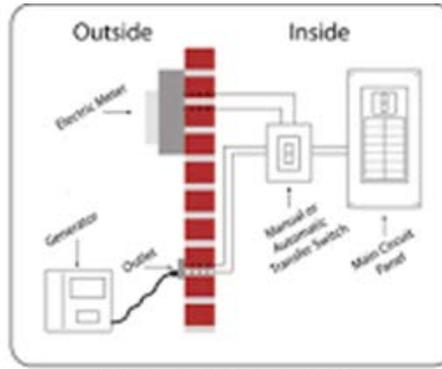


Make sure you use one of the two approved methods for safely generating power:

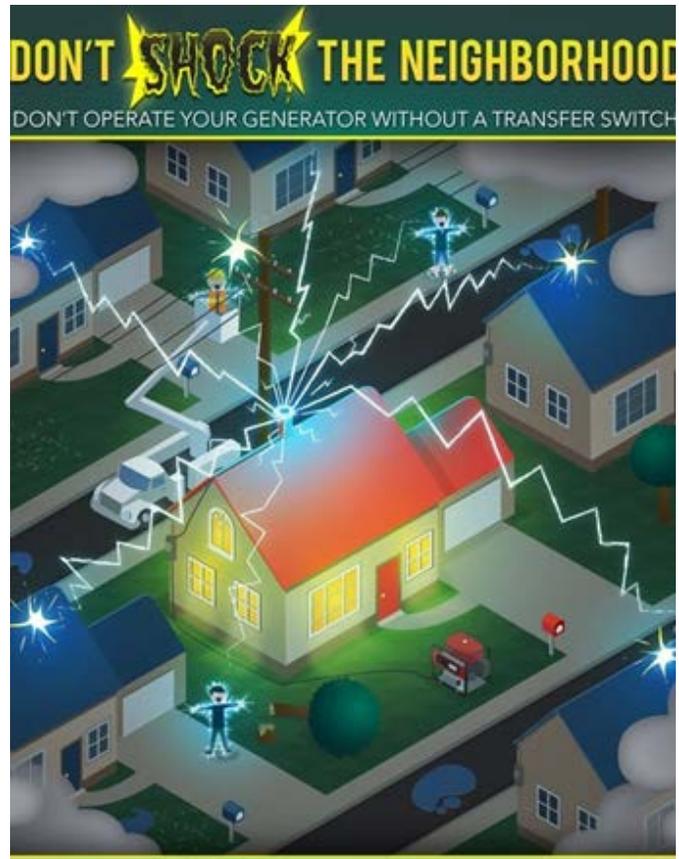
- Direct Connect
- Transfer Switch



Direct Connect Installation



Transfer Switch Installation



GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

- Plan Ahead. Don't wait to depend on a generator after the power goes out.
- Be sure to use the generator correctly as manufacture recommends.

Avoid Carbon Monoxide Poisoning (#1 Cause of injury or death)

Electrocution

Fire

- Keep generators outside but dry (recommendation of 20ft from exterior of home)
- Disconnect electricity coming into the home.(Transfer Switch)

Shut off main breakers

Pull Meter from base

Notify Power Company of your actions and plan

- Ground your generator
- Never plug your generator into your home's power grid. (Suicide Cord)

Only a licensed professional should install this system. Transfer Switch

- Maintain an adequate supply of fuel
- Turn off and let cool prior to refueling generator
- Inspect and maintain regularly

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_iPRmSOJGoA



US Department of Labor issues emergency temporary standard to protect workers from coronavirus

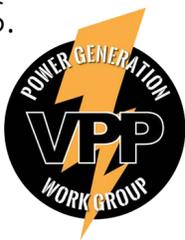
Increases protections for 84M private sector workers

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR NOVEMBER 4, 2021

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration today announced a new emergency temporary standard to protect more than 84 million workers from the spread of the coronavirus on the job. The nation's unvaccinated workers face grave danger from workplace exposure to coronavirus, and immediate action is necessary to protect them.

Under this standard, covered employers must develop, implement and enforce a mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy, unless they adopt a policy requiring employees to choose to either be vaccinated or undergo regular COVID-19 testing and wear a face covering at work.

Since 2020, the coronavirus has led to the deaths of 750,000 people in the U.S., and the infection of millions more, making it the deadliest pandemic in the nation's history. Many of the people killed and infected by this virus were workers whose primary exposures occurred at their jobs. OSHA estimates that this rule will save thousands of lives and prevent more than 250,000 hospitalizations due to workplace exposure to COVID-19 over the course of the ETS.



COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on workers, and we continue to see dangerous levels of cases,” said U.S. Labor Secretary Marty Walsh. “We must take action to implement this emergency temporary standard to contain the virus and protect people in the workplace against the grave danger of COVID-19. Many businesses understand the benefits of having their workers vaccinated against COVID-19, and we expect many will be pleased to see this OSHA rule go into effect.”

The emergency temporary standard covers employers with 100 or more employees – firm or company-wide – and provides options for compliance. The ETS also requires employers to provide paid time to workers to get vaccinated and to allow for paid leave to recover from any side effects.

The ETS also requires employers to do the following:

- Determine the vaccination status of each employee, obtain acceptable proof of vaccination status from vaccinated employees and maintain records and a roster of each employee's vaccination status.
- Require employees to provide prompt notice when they test positive for COVID-19 or receive a COVID-19 diagnosis. Employers must then remove the employee from the workplace, regardless of vaccination status; employers must not allow them to return to work until they meet required criteria.
- Ensure each worker who is not fully vaccinated is tested for COVID-19 at least weekly (if the worker is in the workplace at least once a week) or within 7 days before returning to work (if the worker is away from the workplace for a week or longer).
- Ensure that, in most circumstances, each employee who has not been fully vaccinated wears a face covering when indoors or when occupying a vehicle with another person for work purposes.



The emergency temporary standard does not require employers to pay for testing. Employers may be required to pay for testing to comply with other laws, regulations, collective bargaining agreements, or other collectively negotiated agreements. Employers are also not required to pay for face coverings.

“While vaccination remains the most effective and efficient defense against COVID-19, this emergency temporary standard will protect all workers, including those who remain unvaccinated, by requiring regular testing and the use of face coverings by unvaccinated workers to prevent the spread of the virus,” said Deputy Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Jim Frederick. “As part of OSHA's mission to protect the safety and health of workers, this rule will provide a roadmap to help businesses keep their workers safe.”

OSHA is offering robust compliance assistance to help businesses implement the standard, including a webinar, frequently asked questions and other compliance materials.

The ETS will cover two-thirds of the nation's private-sector workforce. In the 26 states and two territories with OSHA State Plans, the ETS will also cover public sector workers employed by state and local governments, including educators and school staff.

Leading companies, including major airlines, manufacturers and retailers, have taken similar actions in recent months – adopting vaccine requirements or regular testing as necessary measures to protect their workers and customers.



The ETS is effective immediately upon its publication in the Federal Register. Employers must comply with most requirements within 30 days of publication and with testing requirements within 60 days of publication.

The ETS also serves as a proposal for normal rulemaking for a final standard. OSHA is seeking comment on all aspects of this ETS and whether the agency should adopt it as a final standard.

OSHA will continue to monitor the status of COVID-19 infections and deaths, as the number of vaccinated people in workplaces and the general public increases and the pandemic evolves. OSHA will update the ETS should the agency find a grave danger no longer exists for the covered workforce (or some portion thereof), or new information indicates a change in measures is needed.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to help ensure these conditions for America's workers by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance.





Get to Know

DAVE SMITH AT WIN WASTE INNOVATIONS

What Company do you work for and what is your title?

Win Waste Innovations (formerly Wheelabrator Technologies) -
Senior Safety Auditor

How did your work background / education lead to involvement with VPP?

Growing up at home I operated farm equipment, worked with heavy equipment doing highway construction and snow plowing, and built houses. I attended Penn State for business management and eventually ended up working in the Construction Dept. for Pennsylvania Power and Light (now PPL) where we built and maintained power plants. From there I went to Foster-Wheeler Constructors as a Construction Safety Manager and later to Foster Wheeler Power Systems. In 1993 I began working for Wheelabrator Technologies as the EHS Manager at a waste coal power plant very close to my home in central PA. The Safety Director for Wheelabrator had come from GE Aerospace where he was involved with VPP and wanted to start the initiative at Wheelabrator, so he asked if we were interested in getting the plant into the program. In 1996 we became the first VPP site in the Company and only the 13th Star site in PA. at the time!



I believe the “hands-on” experience early in my career greatly contributed to my success as I was able to directly relate to the challenges employees faced while performing their work. I am also thankful to several key people who provided me opportunities to advance in my career and now enjoy doing the same for others.

I have worked for more than 32 years in the power generating industry, including 29 years as a health and safety professional in varying capacities with Wheelabrator/WIN Waste Innovations. During that time I have seen VPP grow from its infancy to the premier safety certification program in the country.

How do you support VPP at your company?

At WIN-Waste Innovations we have instituted a VPP Readiness Review program where we self-evaluate our sites between re-certifications. We also mentor other companies in obtaining VPP status, work with OSHA VPP teams as Special Government Employees (SGE’s) and present industry best practices at VPPPA conferences.

What benefits have you seen while working with VPP sites / aspiring VPP sites?

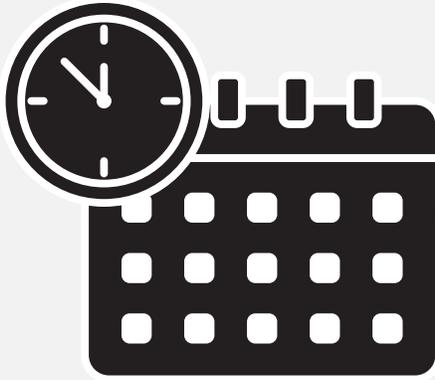
The most rewarding aspect of assisting other VPP sites is the appreciation received from employees in helping them to provide a safer workplace.

What would you like to see in future PG VPP meetings or newsletters?

I think sharing best practices would be very beneficial, particularly in this type of focused industry work group.



UPCOMING EVENTS



NOVEMBER 18TH 4TH
QUARTER POWER
GENERATION VPP
WORKGROUP CALL

REMEMBER!

If you have articles for the newsletter, please contact Courtney Robinson at courtney.Robinson@luminant.com.

If you would like to volunteer for a Safety Moment or VPP element presentation at one of our quarterly meetings, please contact Kelli Heflin at kelli.heflin@onwardenergy.com or Alex Miller at alexander.miller@vistracorp.com.

