

Compare and contrats: lineman terms



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In the electrical construction business, power companies can choose whether to use contractors or their own workers to complete a job. They must consider the size of the job and time frame they have to complete the job. The work habits of contract linemen and Georgia Power Company linemen play a large part in the decision of which group will be the best to complete the job. Linemen use heavy equipment to complete their jobs. An aerial bucket is a truck that has a fiberglass boom, a long scissor like arm, with an isolated bucket attached so that linemen can use it to reach energized electrical lines.

Some of these buckets have a special fiberglass arm at the end of the boom with a roller on it, called a jib, which uses a winch to lift heavy objects up to one thousand pounds, called material handlers. Contractors use a two man material handling bucket. Due to strict rules about working two conductors at the same time, Georgia Power linemen can't work out of a two man bucket so they use a single man material handling truck. The next piece of equipment used by a lineman is a line truck. It has an auger attached to the boom that digs deep holes for the pole to be set.

This truck also sets the pole and can lift heavy objects with its winch line, similar to how a crane works. The contractor's truck has a center mounted boom, which has a seat mounted at the base on the boom. This truck can work the same strength from either side of the truck. Unlike the contractor's truck, the Georgia Power lineman's truck is a corner mounted boom, which is located on the rear passenger side of the truck. It has a farther reach off of the passenger side of the truck, but it is not as strong on the driver side of the truck.

These trucks have to pull trailers behind them to haul poles around. A contract lineman uses a thirty foot pole trailer which is the standard size used to haul around a large number of poles. The company lineman uses a material trailer that is about fifteen foot long with boxes on the side to hold wire and materials. When they need to haul a pole, the tongue can be extended out to the length needed. This trailer can only haul about five poles at max. Although they use different trucks, the truck's joysticks and levers all have the same functions.

One of the major similarities between a contractor and a Georgia Power lineman is that they both have to follow rules and regulations from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Electrical Safety Code standards. They both have to wear a harness when working out of the bucket, and wear a body belt, has two d-rings placed at the hips that you attach a strap to, when they are six feet off the ground on a pole or ladder. Both types of lineman must wear rubber gloves while working in the bucket that cover hand up to the elbow.

A contractor wears class three rubber gloves. They are rated for thirty thousand volts. Working on the same line, a Georgia Power lineman can wear class two gloves that are rated for twenty thousand volts. The reason for the difference in standards is the amount of cover-up used, which is another way linemen stay protected while working on electrical wires. It is called this because they use it to cover the energized lines. Cover-up is orange colored so that the linemen can easily see it and it comes in many forms.

The contract linemen and company linemen use hoses, blankets, and hoods to cover-up the power lines. A hose, sometimes called an eel, is six feet long and slides over the wire to cover around it. A blanket is a four foot square that is used to wrap around the pole, its arms, or insulators. A hood is pre-formed to fit insulators perfectly, but not all linemen use them because they take up too much space on the truck. A contractor does not use the same amount of cover-up as a Georgia Power lineman would. Company linemen have a four step cover-up procedure.

First, they must cover the conductors in the order they come to them.

Second, before uncovering an energized conductor, all paths to ground must be covered. A ground is anything that an electric current can use to get back to the earth from the wire. Third, before working on a grounded component, all energized conductors must be covered. Last, the cover-up must be removed in the order it was placed. It makes for a little more work for the company lineman, but it keeps them from having to wear rubber sleeves.

Unlike the company lineman, a contractor must wear rubber sleeves which start at the top of the shoulder and covers down to the wrist because they don't use the four rules of cover-up. When the trucks are in an area of energized lines, a contract lineman always has to ground their truck to the pole ground. The truck ground is a copper wire that ties the truck through the pole ground to the system neutral to protect from accidental electrical charge.

A power company lineman only has to ground their truck when setting poles and only if there is a chance of an accidental contact to the truck due to a

broken insulator or pole. Contractors must do a lot of traveling in order to keep their job; they don't have a set location to work from. At the power company, a lineman stays at the same headquarters during his career. Since the lineman is at home, the company calls him to work for local power outages. When major hurricanes strike the coast lines, tornados blow away cities, or blizzards freeze a mountain town, both types of linemen can be asked to help restore power to these communities.

When a contractor goes out of town, his crew will be the only ones that work together during the restoration. They will meet up with fellow contract lineman only for meals and meetings. As a Georgia Power lineman, you are sent out with your whole region. A caravan of trucks and vans leave the headquarters and travel to their destination together to help restore power to the area. There are also support members from inside the office that travel with the team. While away from home, contract linemen either sleep in a hotel or, on occasion, sleep inside their trucks.

The power company linemen have a support team to make sure they get a good place to sleep every night while on the storm group. So the likelihood of having to sleep in their trucks is slim to none. The quality of work differs between the contract lineman and a Georgia Power lineman. A contract lineman bids on the job and gets paid per task they complete. Because speed equals money, a contract lineman tends to rush through work to finish faster. Because he is rushed, the maybe work is unsatisfactory to trained company lineman.

Contractors have a saying, “ It looks good to me. You can’t see it from my house. ” A company lineman can take his time and do his job safely and this reflects in his work. He takes pride in his work because he can ride around his community and look at project he has worked on. I know firsthand the work habits of a contract lineman and a Georgia Power Company lineman. I worked for contractors for five years before I was hired by the power company. After many years of line experience, I have noticed that my work and safety habits improved after becoming a company lineman.

Even though both types of linemen have the same profession, they approach the job in different ways to complete it. A power company chooses contractors over company linemen when it is necessary to stay devoted to a single job they are working on. Company linemen have the responsibility of responding to power outages, and this extends the time it takes to complete the job. The pros and cons of both types of linemen and the time it takes to complete the job are the two major factors that are taken into consideration by Georgia Power Company when deciding which group will be assigned to the job.