



100 years

of IHSA's Electrical Utility Safety Rules

Health and Safety education is nothing new in Ontario. In fact, IHSA's efforts as a leader in health and safety education have been built on a century of high-risk hazard education and the basic principles of health and safety now entrenched in provincial law.

Since 1914, the *Electrical Utility Safety Rules* (EUSR) has been the foundation of health and safety education in the electrical and utilities industry. It was created through the Electrical Employers' Association of Ontario and maintained by the Electrical and Utilities Safety Association of Ontario, one of IHSA's legacy organizations.

Since its first publication, the EUSR has laid out a set of rules that are the governing principles of safe work for electrical workers who work on or near electrical distribution or transmission systems in Ontario. These workers include powerline technicians, utility arborists, and high-voltage electrical workers.

This set of rules has changed over its century of existence, adapting to meet the needs of workers and reflecting changes in technology and work methods. However, the fundamental principles have rarely deviated. They are a reflection of the knowledge and experience of the membership and others in the industry to identify, eliminate, and control hazards and prevent injuries and illnesses.

This foundation document helped, in part, to form future safety-related publications in Ontario such as

the *Occupational Health and Act*. For example, rule 9 from the 1914 document states: *"Workmen should refuse to do any work which they believe themselves unable to perform safely."*

Another example is rule 4, which required high-hazard work to be performed by competent workers trained in safe work methods: *"All work in which a hazard exists should be under the supervision of an experienced and competent workman."*

While we think these are modern ideas, it is evident that while work was inherently dangerous a century ago and injury and fatality a commonplace occurrence, there were some that knew safe work environments were everyone's responsibility.

In 2014 the latest edition of the EUSR was published by IHSA. The rule book has been updated to once again provide appropriate safety guidance for the times.

To help announce the changes that were made to the EUSR and to better transfer knowledge on how to use the rules, IHSA has created a one-day EUSR training program. A description of this course is available on the ihsa.ca website. You can get your copy of the 2014 edition of *Electrical Utility Safety Rules* (RB-ELEC) by visiting ihsa.ca/products

