AMERICAN PUBLIC POWER ASSOCIATION

Powering Strong Communities

APPA
Safety Awards of Excellence

Application Guidebook for the 2025 Award Year

Updated: December 2025

Contents

Overview

In June of 2024, the APPA Board of Directors established a new Safety Committee comprised of APPA members who are leaders in the public power safety community. The purpose of the committee is to align, and provide strategic direction for, the Association's various safety programs, conferences, events, and projects, including the publication of the APPA Safety Manual.

Based on feedback from the Safety Committee, APPA revised the Safety Awards of Excellence application and program for calendar year 2025. The objective of the revision process was to:

- Ensure member input in the process of developing the safety awards application,
- Develop an awards application that accurately reflects the effectiveness of a utility's safety program, and
- Ensure that the awards application will allow smaller utilities, with fewer resources, to qualify for an award.

APPA is using the same awards application for calendar year 2025. The application is included as an attachment to this guide, which will allow members to review it before it is posted online for responses in January. Points awarded for each question are also noted in the application. Once completed, member utilities will be able to tally the points in the application to determine their final score before submitting to APPA for review.

APPA will conduct a webinar on *January 14, 2026,* to discuss the new application and address any questions from members. Register using this link (Safety Awards Webinar) to join this free webinar. Visit the Safety Awards website for details.

I. Award Requirements and Eligibility

Awards Eligibility

All regular APPA utility, joint action agency, and state/regional association members are eligible for awards in this program upon timely submission of the APPA Safety Awards application and application fee. *Note:* Prior to 2024, the awards program required utilities to submit applications for three consecutive years to qualify for an award. This is no longer an eligibility requirement for the program.

Reporting Worker-Hours

As part of their application, each utility must include worker-hours covering employees and supervisors on all shifts including operating, production, maintenance, clerical, office, and all other departments of the electric utility.

Grouping of Contestants

Contestants will be grouped according to the number of worker-hours reported by the utility as follows:

Group	Worker-Hours of Exposure
A	Less than 15,000
B	15,000 to 29,999
C	30,000 to 59,999
D	60,000 to 109,999
E	110,000 to 249,999
F	250,000 to 999,999
G	1,000,000 to 3,999,999
H	more than 3,999,999

Application Fee

An application fee is required to submit an award application. This non-refundable fee covers the costs associated with reviewing the application and purchasing the plaques for award winners. The fee is due upon submission of the award entry form. The price per group is listed below:

Utility Size	Fee
Tier 1: Groups A-C	$50
Tier 2: Groups D-F	$175
Tier 3: Groups G-H	$225

The awards data collection period shall start January 1, 2025 and terminate December 31, 2025.

II. Awards Application Overview

The safety awards application includes the following three sections:

Section 1: Lagging Indicators

Lagging indicators measure the occurrence and frequency of past events, such as the number or rate of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. They assess an organization's historical safety performance and are traditionally used to identify deviations from established safety goals.

In this section, utilities are asked to provide their Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) and their Days Away, Restricted & Transferred (DART) Rate based to the hundredth decimal place (0.00) using the following formulas:

Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) = (Total Number of Recordable Cases * 200,000) ÷ Number of Worker-Hours

Days Away, Restricted & Transferred (DART) Rate = (Total Number of DART Cases * 200,000) ÷ Number of Worker-Hours

Utilities are also asked to provide the total number of reportable cases, the total number of DART cases, and the total number of fatalities in four groups (Generation, Transmission, Distribution, and Services) with subgroups based on activities within those groups.

A "reportable injury or illness" is defined as any injury or illness arising out of and in the course of employment which results in death, days away from work, restricted work activity, or medical treatment. Types of injury or illness used in reporting are limited to the following:

- **Fatality:** "Fatality" includes any death resulting from an occupational injury or illness regardless of the length of time which elapses between the injury date or illness diagnostic date and death.
- **Days Away from Work:** "Days away from work" cases involve cases where the employee would have worked but could not because of job related injury or illness.
- **Restricted Work Activity:** Workdays (consecutive or not) which, because of injury or illness, the employee:
  - Was assigned to another job on a temporary basis; or
  - Worked at a permanent job less than full time; or
  - Worked at a permanently assigned job but could not perform all duties normally connected with it.
- **Medical Treatment:** Treatment (other than first aid) administered by physician or registered professional personnel under the standing orders of a physician. Medical treatment does not include first aid treatment even though it is provided by a physician or registered professional personnel.

For further clarification please refer to:

- Detailed Guidance for OSHA's Injury and Illness Recordkeeping Rule:

  https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/entryfaq.html

- OSHA's Injury & Illness Recordkeeping Forms – 300, 300A, 301

  https://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/RKforms.html

The Lagging Indicators section also includes five questions on how a utility investigates incidents to help improve safe working practices.

Section 2: Leading Indicators

Leading Indicators are proactive measures that a utility takes to promote safe working practices. These measures play a vital role in preventing worker fatalities, injuries, and illnesses, as well as strengthening safety programs and continuous safety improvement at your utility.

This section contains eight questions, divided into two groups:

- **Safety Culture:** How a utility identifies and communicates safe working practices.

- **Inspections:** How a utility ensures that safe working practices are maintained and followed.

Question 20 in the Leading Indicators section asks if utilities track safety metrics. Examples of metrics may include but not be limited to: Near miss frequency rate (NMFR), Injury frequency rate (IFR), Lost time injury frequency rate (LTIFR), Injury severity rate (ISR), Total recordable incident rate (TRIR), Days away restricted or transferred (DART), and Safety compliance rate.

Note: Tracking Safety Metrics means the ability to produce the information needed to calculate both the Incident Rate and the Days Away, Restricted, or Transferred (DART) Rate

Section 3: Essay Questions (Not Graded but Mandatory)

The final section includes two questions that ask a utility to: 1) Describe how safety your program has improved over the past year; and 2) Identify ideas and activities that could be used to improve public power safety programs.

Responses in this section and not graded. However, APPA and the Safety Committee have decided to make responses to both questions mandatory for the 2025 awards application. The responses will provide guidance to the committee for future safety needs and help strengthen safety programs within the public power community.

III. Scoring and Awards Criteria

Awards are determined by the overall numerical score that each utility receives based on their responses to the application.

Scoring Criteria

A weighted scoring system is used to ensure that smaller utilities with fewer worker-hours are not disproportionately affected by the number of incidents reported in the award year. For example, a single incident at a utility with 15,000 worker hours would result in a higher incident rate compared to a utility with 1,000,000 worker hours for the same incident.

Below are the weighted scoring criteria for each group based on the number of worker hours reported by utilities.

Groups A/B/C	
Section	**Points**
Lagging Indicators 60 Total Points	**Reportable Cases:** 30 Points based incident rates: • Incident rate of **0 to 10 percent**: 30 points • Incident rate of **11 to 20 percent**: 20 points • Incident rate of **21 to 30 percent**: 10 points • Incident rate of **31 percent or higher**: 0 points
	Investigation Questions: 30 Points (5 questions at 6 points per question)
Leading Indicators 40 Total Points	**Safety Culture Questions:** 30 Points (6 questions at 5 points per question)
	Inspections Questions: 10 Points (2 questions at 5 points per questions)

Groups D/E/F	
Section	**Points**
Lagging Indicators 60 Total Points	**Reportable Cases:** 30 Points based incident rates: • Incident rate of **0 to 5 percent**: 30 points • Incident rate of **6 to 9 percent**: 20 points • Incident rate of **10 to 12 percent**: 10 points • Incident rate of **13 percent or higher**: 0 points
	Investigation Questions: 30 Points (5 questions at 6 points per question)
Leading Indicators 40 Total Points	**Safety Culture Questions:** 30 Points (6 questions at 5 points per question)
	Inspections Questions: 10 Points (2 questions at 5 points per questions)

Groups G/H	
Section	**Points**
Lagging Indicators 60 Total Points	**Reportable Cases:** 30 Points based incident rates: • Incident rate of **0 to 3 percent**: 30 points • Incident rate of **4 to 6 percent**: 20 points • Incident rate of **7 to 8 percent**: 10 points • Incident rate of **9 percent or higher**: 0 points
	Investigation Questions: 30 Points (5 questions at 6 points per question)
Leading Indicators 40 Total Points	**Safety Culture Questions:** 30 Points (6 questions at 5 points per question)
	Inspections Questions: 10 Points (2 questions at 5 points per questions)

Award Criteria

Awards are classified into three categories according to the total score a utility receives based on their application responses.

Total Points	Award
90 points or greater	Diamond Certificate
80 – 89 points	Platinum Certificate
70 – 79 points	Gold Certificate
69 points or below	No award

IV. Awards Rules and Disclaimers

Report Form

All definitions pertaining to exposure, employees, etc., printed on the Awards report form shall be considered a part of these rules.

Reporting Procedure

A link to the Awards Entry Form will launch live in January 2026 under the Safety Awards section of APPA's Safety webpage.

The award entry form must be submitted by **January 31, 2026**. If you have any questions, please contact safety@publicpower.org.

Report Confidentiality

All award report forms submitted to APPA will be treated as confidential. Contestant records will be identified by code (in bulletins issued by APPA), EXCEPT FOR UTILITIES RANKING DIAMOND, PLATINUM, OR GOLD, WHO WILL BE RECOGNIZED BY NAME.

Questions

All general questions relating to the awards shall be sent via e-mail to safety@publicpower.org

Detailed inquiries will be handled by APPA Staff, whose answer/decision will be final.

Appendix A: Sample Award Application

Below is a sample application for the 2025 APPA Safety Awards. **The application will be available on the APPA website starting Thursday, January 1, 2026**.

When completing the form, users will be prompted to log into their APPA account, which will automatically populate their contact information. For guidance on logging in or creating an account, please refer to Appendix B.

6. Entrant Utility Information *

Utility Name

City

State

7. Organization Type *

○ Electric Utility

○ Joint Action Agency

○ State Association/Agency

○ Federal Agency

○ Other

8. Employment Information *

A. Total Electrical Worker-Hours of Exposure for Year 2025

B. Total Number of Electrical Employees

9. Please reference the following definitions below to fill out case fields.

- Recordable Illness/Injury Cases- Any Case that resulted in employee(s) needing medical attention beyond first aid measures.
- DART- Cases where the employee missed day(s) away from work, had restricted job duties and/or transferred to another job as a results of the injury.

*

A. Total Number of Recordable Cases [   ]

B. Out of those Recordable Cases, how many fall under the DART category? [   ]

10. DART Time Charges (Calendar Work Days Only)*

Total Number of Day(s) Missed from Work, Days Restricted and Days on Transferred Job [   ]

11. Generation *

	Total number of recordable cases	Total number of DART cases*	Total number of fatalities
Construction	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Operations & Maintenance	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Emergency Response Activities	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Support Services	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Other	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

12. Distribution *

	Total number of recordable cases	Total number of DART cases*	Total number of fatalities
Overhead - New Construction, Maintenance, and Replacement			
Underground - New Construction, Maintenance, and Replacement			
Substation Operations and Maintenance			
Tree Trimming			
Emergency Response Activities			
Meter Services			
Support Services			
Other			

13. Transmission *

	Total number of recordable cases	Total number of DART cases*	Total number of fatalities
Overhead - New Construction, Maintenance, and Replacement			
Substation Operations and Maintenance			
Tree Trimming			
Emergency Response Activities			
Support Services			
Other			

14. Services *

	Total number of recordable cases	Total number of DART cases*	Total number of fatalities
Administration			
Custodial			
Warehousing			
Other			

Lagging Indicators: Investigation Questions

15. Does the utility have reporting and investigation processes for incidents which include: (6 points awarded for responding "yes" to a minimum of three of the following types of reporting categories) *

	Yes	No
Near Miss / Near Hit	☐	☐
Unsafe Conditions	☐	☐
First Aid Injuries	☐	☐
Recordable Injuries	☐	☐
Fatalities	☐	☐

16. Does the utility have a defined process for addressing unsafe conditions/behaviors and changing its safety practices/rules once an issue has been identified and/or investigated? (6 points) *

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

17. Do employees have the authority to stop working in unsafe conditions? (6 points)*

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

18. Does the utility have a written and followed procedure for injury investigation to find root cause(s) with a focus on utility improvements instead of unsafe employee behaviors? (6 points) *

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

19. Does your utility have a disciplinary process that is followed when safety violations occur? (6 points) *

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

Leading Indicators: Safety Culture Questions

20. Does your utility follow a documented Safety Manual? (5 points)

If so, does your utility use the APPA Safety Manual?*(Please note that this question will not affect the utility's scores, the purpose is for APPA to gauge on whether utilities are utilizing the APPA Safety Manual)* *

   ○ Yes, we follow a Safety Manual

   ○ Yes, we utilize the APPA Safety Manual

   ○ No

21. Does your utility require documented daily job safety briefings and confirm their completion? (5 points) *

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

22. Does your utility require regular safety meetings? (5 points) *

- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Quarterly
- ☐ Annually
- ☐ No

23. Does your utility have an employee, consultant, or committee, that fulfills the responsibility of a safety officer? (5 points) *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

24. Does your utility have an annual training plan with safety topics? (5 points) *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

25. Does your utility track safety metrics? (5 points) *

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Leading Indicators: Inspection Questions

26. Does your utility require pre-use vehicle inspections? (5 points)*

   ○ Yes

   ○ No

27. Does the utility require supervisors and/or managers to conduct periodic crew inspections and site audits? (5 points) *

   ☐ Weekly

   ☐ Monthly

   ☐ Quarterly

   ☐ No

Leading Indicators: Essay Questions

28. Do you believe your safety program has improved over the past year? Please expand on why you feel your safety program has improved, declined or remained the same. *

29. What are the greatest needs in public power safety programs? Please provide a narrative of ideas and activities which could be used to improve public power safety programs. *

Appendix B: How to Log In and Save Your Application Progress

When completing the Safety Awards application, members will be prompted to log in to their PublicPower.org account. Logging in ensures that contact information is pre-filled and allows members to save progress and return to the application later.

For Members Who Already Have an Account
- Select **"Sign in using APPA website login"** on the application form
- Enter the email address and password
- **If the password is forgotten:**
  - Click **"Forgot your password"** on the login screen
  - The username is the member's email address
  - Follow the instructions in the email to reset the password

For Members Who Do Not Have an Account
- Select "Sign in using APPA website login" on the application form
- Click "New User" and complete the form
- Use the blue "Search" button to find the company in APPA's system:
  - Spell out the company name or use a keyword (such as the city)
  - Avoid acronyms as these may not be recognized by the system
  - Verify the address to ensure the correct company is selected

If Members Are Unsure About Their Account or Need Help
Contact **products@publicpower.org** for assistance with:
- Checking if an account exists
- Resetting a password
- Creating a new account

How to Save Application and Return Later
Members can save their application at any time and return later to complete it. To save progress:
- Click **"Save and continue later"** at the top right of the form
- Enter an email address and verify it in the fields provided
- Click **Save**
  - A unique link will be emailed to the email address used
  - Use this link to return to the application and resume where you left off