

# ETCP POV: For unions, ETCP certifications matter more than ever

BY ALAN M. ROWE

OUR INDUSTRY IS INHERENTLY collaborative, and investing in ETCP Certified Technicians serves both producers and unions alike. Every employer wants the assurance that they have hired the right people. A union Local with a strong base of ETCP-certified professionals provides that assurance—along with confidence, reliability, and peace of mind.

An experienced, certified crew wastes less time and equipment, understands how to streamline workflows, brings stronger solutions to creative challenges, and is far less likely to be sidelined by preventable accidents. For producers, an ETCP-led crew means fewer resources spent on risk management and delays, and more resources available for the creative aspects of production. For union Locals, a high concentration of ETCP Certified Technicians strengthens the ability to attract and support larger, more complex shows with confidence.

This is clearly a benefit to individuals. But what does it mean for a union or an employer? When ETCP certifications are standard for crew members, work is performed more efficiently and with a constant focus on safety and accident prevention. That efficiency saves money and increases the overall value of the crew.

Between the long, slow recovery for the live event industry after the pandemic and the long, slow start after the labor actions of 2024, entertainment industry workers have seen some of the darkest days in our collective memories. When the industry contracts, jobs become more competitive, and people sometimes overlook safety concerns for fear of losing a job or because they are overly excited when they finally get back to work. It is important that those of us who are ETCP Certified technicians, crew chiefs, and department heads keep this in mind and don't let the safety of our crew get overshadowed by the intoxicating thrill of production. We are all in this industry because we love it, but we must never let ourselves, or the people who work with us, forget that at our core we are professionals in our crafts.

Work is still scarce for many, and outside of political activism we may feel there is not much we can do as individuals to bring jobs to our areas. It is important to remember that productions and companies look at many factors when they decide where to shoot a movie or TV show, stop on a tour, hold a convention, or work out the bugs on the next big musical. In an industry built on efficiency, dependability, and trust, safety and professional standards are everything

and the dependability of the crew base may be enough to tip the scales in our favor. An ETCP certification is more than a badge—it is a statement. Those four letters tell the industry that you are a professional who has made a deliberate investment in your career, increased your value to employers, and contributed to the strength of the union.

Stagehands and entertainment technicians often downplay the complexity of our work, taking pride in making difficult tasks look effortless. That quiet, non-showy pride sometimes works against us: the real hazards of our industry could be overlooked or underestimated. The ETCP certification is a clear way to demonstrate that this work demands expertise, training, and professionalism, and that not just anyone can do what we do every day.

This applies to safety as well. When the industry standards are followed, our rigging and electrical systems are safe but we, and our employers, as well as enforcement agencies, have seen what happens when the standards are not followed. Fires, electrocutions, and stage collapses still happen. The possibility of a high-profile accident outside of our influence could motivate our Producers, or their insurance brokers, to require a more thorough vetting process for all people working with rigging or electricity. The ETCP certifications can make this a very simple process for them.

There is another important element to consider: the ETCP Code of Conduct. ETCP Certification represents a verified level of knowledge and experience, but it also reflects a professional commitment to maintaining a safe, respectful industry. Certified technicians agree to uphold standards that prioritize safety for everyone and explicitly reject discrimination and harassment, whether on their crew or in any working environment. ■



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## ETCP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

This sets forth the code of ethics and professional standards to be observed by holders of documents of certification conferred by the Council of the Entertainment Technician Certification Program (ETCP). Certificate holders shall, in their professional activities, sustain and advance the integrity, honor, and prestige of this profession by adherence to these standards.

1. Hold paramount the safety and health of people, the protection of the environment, and the protection of property in the performance of professional duties; and exercise their obligation to advise clients, employers, employees, bystanders, and appropriate authorities of danger and unacceptable risks.
2. Maintain honesty, fairness, impartiality; act with responsibility and integrity. Adhere to high standards of ethical conduct, with balanced care for the interests of the public, employers, clients, employees, colleagues, and the profession. Avoid all conduct or practice that is likely to discredit the profession or deceive the public.
3. Issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner; and only when founded upon full knowledge of the facts, and competence in the subject matter.
4. Undertake assignments only when qualified by education, training, or experience in the specific technical fields involved; and accept responsibility to maintain and continue one's professional development and competence.
5. Avoid actions which falsify or misrepresent one's professional qualifications, or misrepresent or exaggerate one's degree of responsibility in, or for, the subject matter of prior assignments, or in the solicitation of employment.
6. Act in a manner free of bias with regard to religion, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.



Entertainment Technician Certification Program



## Setting the Stage for Safety: A gallery of ETCP ads through the years

