Light & Power's Health, Safety, Environmental and Quality training in environmental hazard response. (HSEQ) Administrator, Brian Reece, has recently disclosed that the company is exceeding the environmental guidelines and standards established in Barbados, in many cases doing the right thing for the environment on a voluntary basis.

Reece made this remark in light of several key criteria currently being met. "We are maintaining compliance to the ISO 14001 EMS," he said. "This is achieved through planned internal and external specialist audits, targets and objectives annually set and the implementation of procedures written for work which have significant environmental impacts." Light & Power continues to pursue this approach to environmental management voluntarily, since existing environmental legislation is at the framework stage only and therefore regulations are yet to be developed. "In addition, we are constructing a 10MW solar photovoltaic farm at Trents, St. Lucy," said the HSEQ Administrator.

"Also, several street lights have been replaced with LED bulbs; energy efficiency is encouraged on all Light & Power sites, and we conduct training in environmental hazard response," Light & Power includes environmental objectives in its departmental annual work plans and encourages proactive reporting by staff on potential environmental impacts. "Additionally, we engage regulators for non-crisis planned walk-throughs."

Reece also noted that Light & Power had invested extensively in the installation of environmental management equipment, such as spill pallets for all chemicals, oil drums and transformers; a closed collections system for its electrostatic precipitator; and a Continuous Environmental Monitoring System (CEMS).

Not forgetting its corporate social responsibility, the HSEQ Administrator said that Light & Power disposes of waste in environmentally appropriate ways, following international conventions and standards.

Currently, metals are separated for safe disposal and all electronic equipment is shipped to California for recycling through a local waste handler. The decommissioned General Motors generating engines were disposed of as offshore moorings some years ago.

The wires being worked on were grounded, but because the grounding was far away, voltage got into the lines that were being fixed, and the electricity was induced into the wires, giving David an electrical shock. "David’s gloves were smoking and he didn’t appear to be breathing," recounted Curtis.

This all occurred while the two were still high up on the pole, so Curtis got David down, gave him mouth to mouth resuscitation and saved his life. David suffered a 12-inch burn to his hand. Curtis was unharmed physically, but mentally, there were scars; a fear of electricity developed because of the ordeal, and this had to be overcome. Thanks to our counselor, Curtis was able to conquer this fear, and regain the confidence to work with electricity.

Today, Curtis is sharing his knowledge internally and externally with many businesses as one of Light & Power’s Technical Trainers, since he has benefited from years of training. His is no easy task. "People learn at different rates but, on average, it takes four years for personnel to learn how to work with electricity." Light & Power’s regulations instruct, for instance, that if a person is untrained, he or she should stand 10 feet away from exposed conductors. "The reason for this is that you would not be in the primary zone which is 5 feet from energized equipment," Curtis explained.

As a Technical Trainer, Curtis trains new staff and retrained existing staff to ensure their skills remain sharp.

"From last year, I also began training persons from outside of the company," he said. "Those who work around electricity – such as crane operators." Very recently, a training session was held for the staff of CO Williams Industries.

The best protection from electrocution is not to come into contact with exposed wires, Curtis warned. "In split seconds, an electric shock can go from just a tickling sensation, to muscle cramping, to losing control of the muscles, diaphragm contraction and the inability to breathe, then the heart stops."

Curtis reminds property owners that if there is an electrical problem indoors, the main breaker should be turned off and an electrician called to assist. If the problem is with the wires which run from the building to the pole, then a call can be made to Light & Power for assistance. The Company can also provide training for businesses if required.

Voluntarily Green

The FUEL component of your electricity bill goes up and down with the price of fuel fluctuations. The FUEL CLAUSE ADJUSTMENT (FCA) appears on your electricity bill in the column headed:

The FUEL CLAUSE ADJUSTMENT FOR APRIL 2016 IS 16.9458 CENTS PER KILOWATT HOUR

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Vol. 5 April 1, 2016

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Watts New Business

A quarterly newsletter for business customers of The Barbados Light & Power Company Ltd.

Back in 1991, Curtis Brewster was a linesman working on a pole along the Spring Garden at Brighton junction with his colleague David McClean. They were unaware that a set of wires close to the ones they were fixing were still live. "Today, systems are more stringent, so this would not occur now," explained Curtis.
It was Lauren Oliver, a young American author who, commenting on the passing of time, noted that “The bravery was in moving forward, no matter what.” And so it was with us at Light & Power. Given the increasingly competitive nature of the energy industry, the requirements of our customers and the need to improve our operating efficiencies, we knew that we could not continue with business as usual. We are both bound and driven by our responsibility to our customers, who demand and deserve a safe, clean, reliable and cost efficient electricity service. In order to deliver on this promise, from August 2015, we introduced process re-engineering at the Company.

The process was not without some upheaval, causing us to reexamine, rethink and redesign our core business practices to achieve improvements in productivity, timeliness, cost, and methods to enable the most efficient and reliable service for our customers.

We commend the work of a cross-functional team of employees, who made recommendations for improvements as part of the re-engineering process. Here’s a glimpse of some of the changes to how we schedule work and structure our operations:

- Create a Resource Centre structure to centralize planning, processing and scheduling of field work to service our customers.
- Develop an ESRI (GIS) application and processes for online recording of assets, faults, inspections, design and planning work.
- Consolidate Distribution technical support work into one group and operational resources into another.
- Create a central Asset Management team separate from day-to-day operations.
- Develop a Customer Solutions team to focus strategically on the customer in our fast-changing and increasingly competitive environment.

These solutions all point to a more targeted approach to customer service and are geared towards improving our response times, service delivery and, ultimately, total customer satisfaction.

We also used the process re-engineering period to assist in the development of our senior leaders, and although there are no new faces on the leadership team, the roles and classifications are different and more relevant to our business. We employed a common practice across Emera affiliates, where we introduced Director level titles and reassigned responsibilities in an effort to expose the senior leaders to other parts of the organisation, increasing the breadth of their experience.

The new Company directors from March 1, 2016 are:

- Rohan Seale, Director Shared Services, who oversees Human Resources, ICT, Facilities and Administrative functions.
- Ricaido Jennings, Director Finance, who leads the Customer Care, Supply Chain, Compliance and Finance groups.
- Rohan Seale, Director Asset Management, who oversees the long-term planning and performance of Generation and Distribution.
- Johann Greaves, Director Operations, who leads the operations and maintenance of both Generation and Distribution.
- Kim Griffith-Tang How, Director of Customer Solutions, who leads a new department responsible for managing regulatory affairs and developing new energy services for the market.

There’s much more to come, and with everything we’ve learned and done over the past year, we are confident that we can achieve even greater success as we continue to grow and work safely together. We remain committed to our business of providing energy and energy services that are cost effective and reliable for our customers.
Sarah: Obviously, the costs go down, which is good for customers and which helps us avoid any kind of rate impact right now, especially with the current economy, we wouldn’t want to pass on to our customers. We’ve also seen improvements in the way we deliver our service to our customers who have outages. We’ve been able to get there faster. Our reliability has improved, so that we are seeing fewer outages. We’re also working hard to maintain our safety record, which is one that we’re very proud of.

Jennifer: That sounds really, really positive, and how does this all add up to Light & Power being given a good 2015 report from Emera?

Sarah: Light & Power has had an excellent year and we’re actually mentioned by our CEO during our Analyst Call in Halifax, Canada. That doesn’t happen often because Light & Power is one of our smallest utilities, but because of the success that we had with our restructuring, our re-engineering, our improvements in reliability, our stabilizing the fuel charge for our customers and the financial results, we’ve been given an A+. We’re also very proud of the fact that we are seen as a leader on a number of renewable fronts, particularly Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and solar, which are two projects that we are very excited about and are now both well on the way.

Jennifer: Were any of the changes modelled on Emera’s experiences in other territories?

Sarah: In fact, all of our Emera utilities, have experienced the same issues. We are all facing reducing electricity sales with the introduction of renewables and alternative energy, and Light & Power is actually a little bit behind the curve in terms of making these changes in order to become a more nimble, flatter organization that can deliver lower costs.

Jennifer: What are the immediate efficiencies of being a smaller company?

Sarah: Obviously, the costs go down, which is good for customers and which helps us avoid mind. You said sending and receiving information between the meters and the office - how secure is that?

Sarah: It’s very secure. And we are working with our customers to make sure that they understand that that information is not public and that there won’t be any issues with that. But if anyone has questions, please call, and we’ll be sharing more information as we go forward.

Jennifer: The Fuel Clause Adjustment for March was 13.1108 cents per kilowatt hour - the same as February. Sarah, you, like many other customers of Light & Power, must look at that figure on your bill and say “long may it last.” What is the customer feedback to the falling Fuel Clause Adjustment?

Sarah: Oh, no one’s complaining, I can say that for sure, and certainly we’re getting a lot of feedback from pleased customers when they see their bill go down and we will continue to keep it as low as possible. We are hearing from them in the office, we’re hearing from them through our call centre, and they are all very pleased from what we’ve heard, and we believe that will make a big difference in the economy.

Jennifer: So with all of that, what are your priorities as a leader in the energy sector.

Sarah: So for us it is all about making sure that our customers have reliable power. We also want to find ways to ensure that all customers see lower bills, and so our focus continues to be on that. In addition, we have to continue to find ways to be partners with Barbadians to bring renewables on to the system. We have to keep the power reliable, we want to bring costs down, and we’ll focus on trying to distance ourselves from the fossil fuels that are creating problems with the climate and with our costs.

Jennifer: Sarah, what, is your primary feeling when you visit the site at St. Lucy?

Sarah: Well, absolutely, the first feeling is one of pride. It is a first for Emera. This will be the first utility scale solar, throughout all of our utilities and we are very proud of that. Then, you can be quite amazed at the size of it and the fact that it is going to have such a positive effect on the environment.

Jennifer: Thank you, Sarah.