

More than just a certificate on the wall

EARNING AN ETCP CERTIFICATION means so much more than just a certificate on the wall. ETCP certifications offer a level of credibility to peers and contractors, but more importantly, they are an unwavering commitment to safety. ETCP certified technicians help to create a culture of safety in their peer circles and within their organizations, theatres, jobsites, and teams. Everyone who has been in the entertainment industry long enough has come

across a situation they felt was unsafe, hazardous, and potentially dangerous. The difference is how the individual or organization deals with that situation. Young and inexperienced technicians may not be aware of the hazard and others may simply look the other way saying, “we have done it that way before.” ETCP technicians are expected to step in and say something. It could be your first day with a new employer, but as a certified technician, you must

PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT TEUTEN



Home to the Boston Celtics and Bruins, the TD Garden renovation completed in 2019, included a comprehensive color-changing aisle lighting upgrade.

take steps to correct the situation. Increasingly, organizations are placing an emphasis on creating a culture of safety that provides a platform for all voices to be heard without fear of retaliation. With tons of equipment hanging overhead of performers, audiences, and crew, safety in the entertainment industry is more important than ever. ETCP technicians are the loudest advocates for safety. Having certified technicians on your staff is one of the best decisions you can make.

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Starting out as a young project manager for Port, just north of Boston, on the systems installation team, I quickly realized I needed additional training, support, and resources. I found all of that and more within the ETCP program. The extent of the training resources that offered ETCP credits was overwhelming when looking at both Theatre – Rigging and Entertainment Electrician certifications. I knew that I needed to earn my certifications to not only prove to myself that I possessed the knowledge, but also to continue the culture of safety that Port has created. As a young project manager, I was often questioned and criticized onsite by contractors and architects. Earning my certification instantly helped me on those jobsites as my certification provided a level of knowledge and training that were required to complete the project.

I will be the first to admit that I do not know everything and that is part of the reason I choose to work with such an incredible team of talented individuals. Having such a strong team at Port to share thoughts and ideas with is invaluable. As I began my journey to prepare for my Theatre – Rigging certificate, I quickly realized the wealth of the resources that are available to the industry through the ETCP program. As individuals and trainers, ETCP certified technicians are all committed to passing on their knowledge, skills, and advocating for safety at every turn. This became clearer than ever when I stepped foot into my first LDI training with Jay O.



ETC Prodigy Hoists installed at Phillips Exeter Academy's Goel Center for Theater and Dance.



A temporary installation outside the TD Garden for the 2022 NBA finals included hanging signage and luminaires 95' over the crowd.

Glerum in 2011 for his Stage Rigging Fundamentals class. Coming from a mainly production background, I knew there was plenty to be learned about theatrical rigging practices. Jay was an incredible teacher with a wealth of knowledge, and he did not mind taking extra time after class or during breaks to work with someone or answer their questions. Jay's class, resources, *Stage Rigging Handbook*, and course materials were a huge part of my study guide and success in passing the ETCP Theatre – Rigging exam. Jay's class and personal commitment to safety have played a crucial role not only in my own work and journey through the industry, but also in how I have shaped my own teaching materials and practices. Even



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT TEUTEN

Façade lighting for One Financial Center in Boston, MA.

today, 11 years later, I still use my notes and Jay’s materials when I teach rigging classes to students and my peers.

After earning my Theatre – Rigging certification, I set my eyes on the ETCP Entertainment Electrician certification. As an authorized service provider and technician for multiple manufacturers, it was important to me to know I had all the additional resources and training at my disposal to be sure my projects, system startups, and service jobs were as safe as possible. As a production electrician for many years in the Boston area, I felt very comfortable with the knowledge I possessed, but I learned over the previous few years that not everything I was taught was necessarily correct or proper. Having a standardized certification process not only tests your knowledge and skills, but it reinforces that the skills you have learned are the bona fide and accurate methods to use. As part of my final preparation for my exam, I made a point to take



Held at Port in 2019, Richard Cadena leads an Entertainment Electricity, Power Distribution, and Controls course that included the Port team and was also open to other area technicians.

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Richard Cadena’s Entertainment Electricity, Power Distribution, and Controls Training ETCP prep course. After such an amazing experience with Jay O. Glerum in 2011, I just knew that Richard’s class was going to be just as entertaining, fun, knowledge-packed, and challenging. Richard did not disappoint! His three-day class covered everything you could need to prep for the exam, and once again proved that not everything I had learned in the field was truly acceptable. I have sat through Richards’s class twice now, and each time I have learned something new. He has reinforced the skills and knowledge I need and use every day.

Having the Entertainment Electrician certification has been beneficial. It often has provided me the reinforcement I needed when talking with contractors and engineers. On more than one occasion, I have had to correct or have a polite disagreement with an engineer over their calculations. When you can converse together and show them all of the math while sitting at the jobsite conference table, they tend to be very open to the feedback and implementing the required adjustments. There have been many times since those conversations, where the same engineers have called me prior to meetings to check in, discuss the needs of the project, and make sure it is all coordinated correctly. This level of trust all started because I was committed to safety and honing my craft. To me, that is a huge part of what the ETCP program is all about. While there is a significant emphasis on safety, ETCP certifications and continuing education classes are all about making us the best technicians, peers, leaders, designers, consultants, teachers, and trainers that we can be.

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Having now maintained my Theatre – Rigging certification for 10 years and my Entertainment Electrician for eight years, not a day goes by where I have not benefited from the ETCP training, certifications, and continuing education. As theatrical and architectural systems designers, integrators, and installers, our team at Port is challenged and tasked daily to help build new facilities, upgrade and restore older facilities, and more importantly, make sure existing systems and all staff, performers, technicians, and patrons are safe. Having four ETCP certified technicians on staff has played an integral role in the projects that we have been awarded. As the requirement for ETCP certified technicians has grown over the years in theatrical rigging and lighting bid specifications, it has become a vital part of not only how we write our own specifications but also in the staff that we hire and the crew that we choose to work with on jobsites. The requirement for ETCP certified staff can be found in all of our design and specification work as my team and I understand the vital role that certified technicians play in the successful and safe completion of every project, inspection, repair, and upgrade.



Renovation of the Colonial Theatre in Laconia, NH was completed in 2021 and is now a destination for national touring artists, home to a nonprofit resident theatre company, and various civic events.

“[ETCP certification] is an unwavering commitment to your peers, and to our industry that you hold yourself to a higher standard.”

I am proud to display my ETCP certified logo on my emails and letterhead to show my continued support for safety in our industry. However, earning an ETCP certification is so much more than just a certificate on the wall or logo in an email. It is an unwavering commitment to your peers, and to our industry that you hold yourself to a higher standard. It is a vow to always interject when needed and be sure that things are done safely. It comes with an understanding of the importance of lifelong learning and the

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sharing of knowledge with others. It is a personal commitment to always do things the correct way, even if it takes more time and money. It carries a duty to teach others the proper method to do things, so everyone goes home safely at the end of the day. It is more than just a certificate on the wall, it is a gold standard to make you and your organization be the best that you can be. ■



Ron Kuszmar is VP of Architectural and Theatrical Lighting at Port in Seabrook, NH. A professional lighting designer for nearly 20 years, Ron oversees Port's Architectural and Theatrical Lighting Design and Installation departments, as well as the Lighting Control Systems and Equipment Sales teams. At age 16, Ron's lifelong love of the arts drew him to work in community theatre, where he discovered the magic of lighting. Captured by the limitless, distinct-yet-nuanced ambiances created by combinations of color, shadow, and gradients of white light, Ron met his destined career path. Though Ron works nationwide with Port, notable recent local projects include underpass installations for Lynn Beyond Walls; Boston's One Financial Center façade; continuous special presentation lighting for the Boston Bruins and Boston Celtics; and an ongoing array of projects for TD Garden, encompassing game lighting and controls, special arena effects, building-wide controls, a comprehensive color-changing aisle lighting upgrade installation, and exterior color-changing lighting. An ETCP Certified Entertainment Electrician and Theatre – Rigger, ETC-Certified Field Technician, and Hoist Installer (certified by multiple manufacturers), Ron lives north of Boston with his wife and young daughters.

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