EXCELLENCE IN ACTION
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ELECTRICAL SAFETY GEAR IMPROVEMENTS
BRENT HEARD
MANAGER, ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT

THE CHALLENGE
As one of Canada’s top universities for computer science research, Simon Fraser University (SFU) is constantly pushing the boundaries in key areas including big data. And it takes an incredible amount of power generation to ensure that students, faculty, and staff have the infrastructure they need.

“Safety is always our number one priority,” says Brent Heard, Manager, Electrical Department at Facilities Services. “It’s important that our staff have the equipment they need to do their jobs as safely as possible.”

Heard and his team identified some shortcomings with previous electrical safety equipment particularly in the case of a possible arc flash, a fire produced by an electrical discharge.

THE OBJECTIVE
To ensure staff have the optimal electrical safety gear necessary to do their jobs.

THE APPROACH
“Previous head gear would fog up almost immediately and the entire kit was quite awkward to use” says Bruce Lundeberg, Electrician. “The visors for instance were fixed on the old head gear, part of the hood actually, and quite restrictive in terms of the ability to communicate.”

Heard initiated a departmental review process to identify what the needs of the staff were and how to best address those needs resulting in a better understanding of current weaknesses in operational equipment. A few weeks later, while attending a trade show, he spotted electrical equipment that addressed many of the needs previously identified in the review process. The safety kits include helmets with improved visibility and neck protection, rubber gloves with better resistance to electricity, and full-body coat for complete body coverage.

THE RESULT
“The new equipment is much easier to work with and provides a high degree of protection for our staff” says Heard. “Some of the electrical infrastructure here at SFU is not labelled with arc-flash ratings, so to ensure proper safety protocols, we’re providing the highest rated gear possible.”

Electrician Bruce Lundeberg says features like the ability to raise and lower the visor on the head gear improves communication between staff. “It really is a vast improvement over what we had.”

Improving safety for University staff by implementing successful review processes, Brent Heard is helping drive Operational Excellence at Simon Fraser University.

Well done!