



2026 Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo – General Rules

1. All safety rules are to be observed during events.
 2. Rubber gloves are required for all simulated energized journeyman and apprentice events or as specified for each individual event. Rubber gloves may be inspected by the event staff prior to the start of each event. If rubber gloves are not required, work gloves shall be worn during the event.
 3. Safety glasses are required for all events.
 4. Hard hats must be worn properly during all events.
 5. Long-sleeved shirts are required. Sleeves cannot be pushed up or rolled up.
 6. A tool inspection will be conducted to check for safe condition and for any alterations to tools such as:
 - a. Tapered cuts on straps
 - b. Tape on straps
 - c. Filed buckles
 - d. Fingers cut out of gloves
 - e. Elongated holes in straps and belts
 - f. Improper gaff length
 - g. Unsafe handlines
- If a judge discovers altered tools the competitor will receive a 10-point deduction. Points deducted as a result of tool inspection will be deducted from the event that the competitor is competing in at the time the altered tool is discovered.
7. Competitors have a maximum of five (5) minutes prior to starting the event to ask the judge questions and layout tools before the event begins. No questions are permitted after judging has begun. It is the responsibility of the competitor to ask questions as needed during the five (5) minute window.
 8. Video footage will not be allowed to settle judging disputes.
 9. Cheering is encouraged, but professional coaching from supporters outside individual event arenas will be controlled by immediately deducting 2-points to the competitor followed by disqualification, if not stopped.
 10. All tools shall be provided by the competitor unless otherwise noted on the individual event specifications.
 11. Battery powered tools are **not** allowed.
 12. All permanent connections shall be wire brushed before completing connection, or as specified for each individual event.
 13. All connections and hardware will be tightened to the appropriate torque rating using the proper tools (i.e. channel locks shall not be used to tighten nuts, etc.).
 14. Time will start at judge's signal.
 15. Work gloves shall be worn when performing any work on the ground.
 16. Gaff guards must remain on outside of the immediate work area (10 feet from the event pole).
 17. Judging will continue until all materials are packed up and event site is restored to original condition.
 18. It is mandatory for all Journeyman and Apprentice climbing events that the climbing competitors use personal fall protection systems. Fall protection systems shall be supplied by the competitor and be used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications along with the use of a secondary work positioning strap or lanyard while transitioning around attachments on the pole. While using the secondary positioning strap or lanyard, the competitor shall not get into a position to allow for a free fall greater than 0.6 meters (2 feet).



2026 Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo – General Rules

19. Handlines must be used for all climbing events unless otherwise noted on each individual event. There must be one handline for every structure to be climbed. Handlines must meet the requirements stated in the APPA safety manual Section 507.19 that the handlines be constructed of ½ inch diameter rope.
20. Handline shall be carried on a breakaway hook when carrying it on climber's belt.
21. Handline shall be railroaded to the ground prior to descending the pole after work is complete.
22. Time for each event will begin with the judge's signal and the competitor an arm's length from the pole. The fall arrest system will not be allowed to be attached to the pole prior to starting the event. Time stops when the competitor is on the ground and their fall arrest system is detached from the pole, unless otherwise noted on each individual event.
23. Competition eligibility requirements must be met:
 - a. All participants must be employed by a municipal utility, rural electric cooperative, joint action agency, or state/regional association.
 - b. A person is considered an Apprentice for 4 years after they enter an apprentice program. A person is considered a Journeyman after they have completed a 4-year apprenticeship program.
24. On all simulated energized events, Class 2 or higher rubber gloves must be worn ground-to-ground.
25. On all simulated energized events, proper cover-up is required, per NESC® 2023 MAD.
26. On climbing events, climber must be back on the ground before the event will be considered complete, unless otherwise noted on the individual event.

Infractions: 2-point and 10-point deductions

2-point deduction

1. Lose hardhat.
2. Wearing hardhat backwards.
3. Not wearing safety glasses.
4. Improper cover up (i.e., no rubber in reach, fall, or slip zone).
5. Twisted hand line operation.
6. Dropping tools, materials, or equipment to the ground from an elevated position (even if caught).
7. Cutout with loss of control on the pole.
8. Hot-dogging.¹
9. Failure to maintain one gaff in the pole at all times when climbing the pole.
10. Handline operation when a climber is repositioning on the pole.
11. Misuse of tools.
12. Misuse of insulating cover-up.
13. Not wearing a long-sleeved shirt. Sleeves cannot be pushed or rolled up.
14. Injuries or cuts, which result in bleeding.
15. Loss of control.
16. Poor housekeeping.
17. Exceeding the mean time to complete events.
18. Climbers not wearing work gloves (when rubber gloves not required) to perform work on the ground.
19. Climber not wearing rubber gloves (in events where they are required) ground-to-ground.

¹ Hot dogging is defined as a lineworker "being out of control." Examples: both gaffs out of the pole at the same time, drop steps, excessive uncontrolled speed.



2026 Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo – General Rules

2-point deduction (continued)

20. Fall arrest system not used within manufacturer's guidelines and/or not keeping system adjusted properly.
21. Hanging tools on phase conductors, neutrals, crossarms or safety straps.
22. Not carrying handline on a breakaway hook.
23. Failure to maintain minimum approach distances as described by NESC 2023.
24. Failure to follow event rotation schedule.
25. Being late for an event.
26. Professional coaching from outside the event arena.
27. Failure to railroad handline prior to descending pole.
28. If the drop-dead time on any event is exceeded, competitor will be stopped, and there will be a 2-point deduction from the score.
29. Other, as determined by individual event descriptions.

10-point deduction

1. Accidental contact with phases (with any equipment other than approved live line tools).
2. Working opposite energized phases at the same time.
3. Not using hand line, bucket, or material bag for sending materials up and down the poles.
4. Gloves must be worn ground-to-ground.
5. Cut-out and fall to ground. (Climber's feet are approximately 6' from ground level prior to fall.)
6. Other, as determined by individual event descriptions.

Disqualification

1. Unprofessional behavior.
2. Practicing on the Rodeo event poles prior to the Rodeo.
3. Intentional sabotage or tampering with materials, tools, or equipment on the Rodeo field.
4. Protests need to be made by competitor only. No help from the spectators or others is permitted.
5. Coaching from supporters outside the arena that does not stop after the first warning (first warning results in automatic 2-point deduction penalty).
6. Failure to attempt an event.

Contesting a call

Although we try to avoid any contested calls, there may be a time when the competitor feels the need to contest a deduction. The Journeyman or Apprentice must be the one to contest the call. Help from spectators or others in a contested call situation will result in the competitor being disqualified. No competitor will be allowed to protest another competitor.

If a competitor wishes to contest a call he/she must take his/her grievance to the chief event judge who will have been pointed out by the greeter for the event. The competitor must make his/her grievance known to the chief judge *before* leaving the event area. The chief event judge will settle the dispute. If the competitor is not satisfied with this ruling, the competitor may then elect to take his/her protest to the Master judge. If the Master judge upholds the chief event judge's ruling, the competitor forfeits two points. *The decision made by the Master judge is final.* For any questions, contact Tommy Flores by phone 507-461-4993 or email tflores@mmua.org.

Fall Arrest

Implementation of Full Fall Arrest

Due to the OSHA final rule effective April 1, 2015, the Minnesota Lineworkers Rodeo will be requiring the mandatory use of personal fall protection for all Journeyman and Apprentice climbing events. Fall protection systems shall be supplied by the competitor and be used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications along with the use of a secondary work positioning strap or lanyard while transitioning around attachments on the pole. For the sake of competition, it will not be permissible to use two fall arrest devices in any climbing events. While using the secondary positioning strap or lanyard the competitor shall not get into a position to allow for a free fall greater than 0.6 meters (2 feet). Climbers will not be permitted to ascend or descend with both the fall arrest device and the secondary positioning lanyard around the pole. It will be a requirement for every event that the secondary positioning lanyard be disconnected and parked on a D-Ring after transitioning above or below hardware on the pole. With that being said, no climber will be allowed to work from the secondary positioning lanyard alone and must make a full transition and be in full fall arrest prior to doing any work.

Judging Guidelines

Judging will be based on the following:

1. The fall arrest system is being used in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.
2. The climber keeps the fall arrest system adjusted properly at all times.
3. The climber does not create a potential free fall greater than 0.6 meters (2 feet).
4. All cutouts will be judged the same as in the general rules (i.e. loss of control and fall to the ground)

Note: Infractions will be a two-point deduction with the exception of a fall to the ground which will be assessed as a ten-point deduction.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How will it be determined by the judge that a system is not adjusted properly?

A: If a climber is ascending or descending freely without his/her hands on the device then it will be deemed that the system is out of adjustment.

Q: Can the device be on the pole prior to start time of the event?

A: No equipment will be attached to the pole prior to the start of the event.

Q: When transferring above equipment can the fall arrest be left in place and a secondary safety be used thereafter?

A: No. The fall arrest system must stay attached to the climber's belt at all times.

Demonstrational Videos

[DBI SALA Cynch-Lok](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VQZ1_Gunh4) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VQZ1_Gunh4)

[Buckingham SuperSqueeze](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hR7o46cMLzQ) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hR7o46cMLzQ)

[Bashlin Pole Lariat](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOttIsNcc8w) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOttIsNcc8w)

[JELCO Pole Choker](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxBVDJDziZI) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AxBVDJDziZI)