

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s collectors discussed the formation of a national organization due to their desire to better coordinate locations for larger insulator shows in the United States. The National Insulator Association (NIA) was officially formed July 7, 1973 at the 4th Annual National Insulator Show in Hutchinson, Kansas. Today the NIA is an international organization of collectors and friends interested in the preservation and conservation of the history and beauty of communication, power, and special service insulators and their associated hardware. The NIA also conducts, funds, and encourages continuing research and education concerning insulators, their inventors, systems engineers, and the commercial enterprises that produced, distributed, and utilized them throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

Today, the NIA is a charitable organization, and is organized exclusively for charitable, educational, religious, literary and scientific purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The geographical regions of the Association are defined in Article 4, Section 4.5 of the NIA Bylaws. The Association sponsors three (3) major insulator shows, one in each geographic region of Continental North America. One of these three annual shows serves as the NIA Convention Show referred to as "The National," and it rotates among the three regions year to year.

The NIA publishes and delivers a quarterly newsletter called Drip Points. This publication is distributed via US mail, e-mail and Internet download. Its primary goal is to inform members of all association matters. Drip Points contains articles and pictures submitted by the association officers, chairpersons, and advisors that highlight current hobby activity, on-going association projects, and the fulfillment of NIA goals. The NIA membership roster is published annually, in cooperative agreement, by "Crown Jewels of The Wire" Magazine.

Members of the NIA are extended privileges and services that are not available to non-association hobby members. Many NIA members are actively involved in preserving and conserving the history and beauty of telecommunication and electrical service distribution insulators. Many members actively support the NIA's goals and projects by volunteering their time and effort.

DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

INSULATOR RELATED DEFINITIONS

The term “insulator” or “insulators” appearing throughout this handbook refers specifically to any device used to prevent the passage, leakage, or undesired flow of electricity. It does not refer to devices used to prevent the transfer of thermal or mechanical energy.

An “Original Insulator” is defined as any device manufactured at any time by any industrial, commercial, or private interest with the specific intended purpose of being commercially or privately utilized to prevent the passage, leakage, or undesired flow of electricity.

A “Special Purpose Original Insulator” is defined as any device manufactured at any time by any industrial, commercial, or private interest, with existing regular production equipment, specifically made to be collectible as a souvenir or memento, or to enhance the marketing or sales of original insulators.

A “Salesman Sample” is a specific type of special purpose original insulator uniquely defined as a model of an insulator known to have been manufactured by an insulator company for salesmen to use as a promotional gift or product example.

An “Imitation Insulator” is defined as any device resembling an original insulator, or special purpose original insulator that is not actually an original insulator or special purpose original insulator but could be represented as such. This definition may appear in other terms including but not limited to: reproduction insulator, insulator copies, insulator replicas, or counterfeit insulators.

RULE: All imitation insulators must be permanently marked “REPRODUCTION” with the exceptions noted below in Commemorative and Miniature Insulator definitions.

A “Commemorative” or “Private Issue Commemorative” is a specific type of Imitation Insulator that is uniquely defined as any device manufactured to resemble an insulator with specific embossing declaring the commemorated person, place, device, event, organization, or insulator design.

A “Miniature Insulator” is an Imitation Insulator and is uniquely defined as any device resembling an insulator known to have been manufactured by a private individual or organization for the purpose of resale or gifting as a promotion or commemorative.

RULE: All Miniature Insulators must be permanently marked “REPRODUCTION” and the calendar year of production. If the physical size of the item renders such markings impractical the calendar year marking will suffice.

A “Questionable Insulator” is defined as any device purporting to be an original insulator or original special purpose insulator whose provenance is uncertain or cannot be validated or verified. The NIA does not require questionable insulators to be permanently marked. Nor does the NIA require any disclosure by the owner at the time of sale or trade.

An “Altered Insulator” is any original insulator, commemorative or salesman sample that has been intentionally modified. Often, this is to make it appear to be worth more than it would otherwise have been worth for the specific purpose of deceiving the buyer and/or profiting the owner.

RULE: All Altered Insulators must be permanently marked “FAKE.”

A “Restored insulator” is any original insulator, commemorative or salesman sample that has been intentionally modified to make it more resemble its original factory appearance. Restored items present a unique dilemma. In the wrong hands restored items can be misrepresented the way that altered items can. Restored insulators are not required to be permanently marked, as is the case with imitation altered insulators. It is important to note that for an insulator to be deemed "restored", the repair must not enhance the insulator beyond what would have been its original factory intended appearance (i.e. removal of drip points or threads, change in color, etc.). To do so would make it an altered insulator. Restored insulators are not required to be permanently marked “RESTORED”.

RULE: The NIA requires any repair to an insulator be disclosed to a potential buyer.

TERMINOLOGY

“Objectionable to the Best Interests of the Hobby” includes, but is not limited to, any action or item which is likely to cause financial damage and/or loss, ill will, or injury to collectors or organizations involved in the collecting of insulators and related items. For example, a false or misleading representation of fact likely to cause confusion and/or the possibility of the use of an insulator to commit fraud (either by the issuing party or through a subsequent party).

“NIA Approved” is a term reserved for use by the Board of Directors. Any member may apply for permission to use the term “NIA Approved” in conjunction with the production and distribution of any hobby related material.

RULE: Any use of the NIA name, graphics, logo, or proprietary material in any form by any entity for personal or commercial purposes (including endorsements), must be approved in writing by the NIA Board of Directors in advance of its use. Approval for commercial use of all NIA proprietary physical and intellectual property shall include an appropriate written agreement for compensation to the NIA for such use.

“Manufactured in Accordance with NIA Guidelines” is a term reserved by the Board of Directors for the production and distribution of hobby related material specifically including Imitation Insulators. Use of this term means that those engaged in the production and distribution of the Imitation insulator or hobby related material have agreed to abide by all NIA guidelines.

RULE: NIA members who intend to engage in the production and or distribution of any hobby related material, especially Imitation Insulators, shall agree to apply in writing for NIA endorsement prior to commencing any phase of production and wait for the NIA’s written response before commencing production.

“Permanently Marked” An item is considered “Permanently Marked” when it bears an identifying alpha-numeric graphic that cannot be removed without obviously disfiguring or conspicuously damaging the item. Ideally such a mark will result from lost material (such as engraving or etching) rather than added material (such as embossing.) However, due to the diverse styles of insulators, the NIA reserves the right to determine what constitutes permanent marking on a case-by-case basis for imitation and altered insulators.

“Hobby Related Material” as used in the Code of Ethics is a term designed to give the NIA Board of Directors the most broad oversight when investigating and dealing with any issue suspected or found by the Board of Directors to be contrary to the best interests of the hobby.

“Related Items” as used in the Show Standards Section include virtually all items associated with power or communications equipment, plus items such as lightning rod equipment, pole nails, magazines, books, etc.