Memphis Light, Gas and Water
Memphis, Tennessee
Southeast Region ILG Member

Company Overview
Type of Industry: Municipal Utility
Number of Employees: 2680
www.mlgw.com

The nation’s largest three-service municipal utility, Memphis Light, Gas and Water (MLGW) serves nearly half a million customers every day by providing access to electricity, natural gas and water services across the city of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee. To deliver these resources, it relies on nearly 2680 employees.

Recognizing that these individuals are its greatest resource, MLGW has a long-standing commitment to ensuring employees who acquire disabilities can stay at or return to work following accident or injury. Indeed, doing so is essential to MLGW’s bottom line, allowing it to retain the skills and talents of people in whom it has invested—and who want to keep contributing to their company and community.

One such individual is Connie Jones, whose career with MLGW goes back to 1981, when she first joined the company as an apprentice. Ms. Jones quickly advanced to journeyman in three and a half years and became a groundbreaker; she was the first African-American women in Electric Operations in MLGW’s Electric Substation department.

One day in 1993, Connie’s life changed in an instant. She was checking a circuit breaker at a substation when she discovered it was active, not turned off as it should have been. As Connie laid unconscious on the floor after falling off a ladder, coworkers rushed to her side wondering if she was alive. She survived the accident, but her right arm had to be amputated, and she had serious burns on her left. She spent a month in the hospital, followed by intensive rehabilitation.

Key to her recovery, Connie says, is the support she received from MLGW. Immediately, the company appointed someone to be her liaison to find out what she needed. MLGW’s president and another employee who had lost limbs in an accident visited her in the hospital that first night. “MLGW and my coworkers stepped in and helped. Whatever the doc said I needed, they provided,” she said.

A few months after the accident, Connie felt ready to return to work. She talked to her doctor and MLGW and set a plan. At first, this entailed an office-based position. Not long after, Connie wanted to get back “out there” and transitioned again, working in various departments in Electric Operations. Eventually, she moved to a new department, Energy Service and Marketing, where she became a Lighting Design Representative, a job that entails planning the lighting for common facilities such as parking lots, apartment complexes or parks. It’s a career she loves, she says, with a company she loves as well.

“Consideration and care after an injury are very important. MLGW did right by me. I’m grateful, and I am very happy to work here. Physically, psychologically, I got the help I really needed. MLGW, the Med [Regional Medical Center at Memphis], they all supported me and provided help on all fronts.”

- Connie Jones, Lighting Design Representative, MLGW