



The Beacon

"Shedding Light On The Illinois Towing Industry"

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tarmac Takeover
Rantoul, IL
July 24-26

Indiana Tow Show
Fair Oaks Farm
July 31-August 2

Zone Meetings
TBA

The PTROI Wants You!!

The PTROI is currently looking for two members, one to fill the position of Secretary and one to fill the position of Director. The position of Secretary has become available. The PTROI Secretary is the record-keeper for the PTROI. From keeping minutes at meetings to assisting in running the PTROI elections, sitting on the Board of Directors as well as the Executive Board for voting and decision-making, this is a necessary position that we need to fill. To fill this position your company must have been a PTROI member for at least the last 2 years.

The Directors' position is equally as important as it the directors are involved in voting at board meetings, being involved in committees, and supporting the PTROI and it goals in the towing industry.

While these are unpaid positions, you will gain considerable knowledge of the inner workings of the PTROI, as well as knowledge of the towing industry that can help you run your business more profitably. We have actually had people tell us that sitting on the Board of Directors they learned how to run a better business and become more profitable.

For more information call 800-286-0519.

SAVE THE DATE
PTROI TOPGOLF SUN. SEPTEMBER 20, 4:00PM



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OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Ed Forsythe, Phone: 800-286-0519 Email: ed@ptroi.com
Please direct all your questions and concerns to Ed at the number above.

PRESIDENT

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Letter from the President:

The hot weather has arrived and made some of us wish we were elsewhere. Unfortunately, we can't always just go when we want as we have multiple responsibilities around the shop. One of the jobs we must handle on a daily basis is the survival of our business.

As most of you know, for most of us 2026 has been a down year in terms of business. As owners, we must stay on top of things such as payroll, fuel usage, wasted time and miles. These are all things that we can and should control. Now comes the hard part! Do we want to park a few trucks and drop insurance on them? We might still be paying on them and not using them, not a choice I want to make. Do we want to let a driver or two go? Drivers that we could not find in the first place and spent many hours and a bunch of money training, that we may not be able to find again without going through the hiring and training all over again? Also, not my favorite choice!

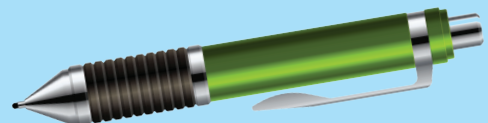
That takes us back to controlling those things that we can control. Run your business as efficiently as possible, watch for waste, theft, and other things that make the company less profitable. These are things we should be doing all the time but we sometimes don't follow as much when business is good. All we can do is work hard, stay focused, and hopefully things will get better.

Bruce Pedigo, President, PTROI

DO YOU LIKE TO WRITE?

*Do you feel you can contribute to
our monthly newsletter?*

**Then send your articles to the PTROI Office
and you may get to see your article in the Beacon!**



Stand On Someone's Shoulders

The idiom “stand on someone’s shoulders” means: *to benefit from the previous work, discoveries, or achievements of those who came before you. It implies that your current success or progress is only possible because others paved the way and laid the groundwork first.*

This came to my mind several times in the last couple of days. First with celebrating America’s 250th anniversary. It’s almost mind-boggling to try and think of everything we in the year 2026 have benefited from in so many ways from the inventors, scientists, leaders, entrepreneurs, family members, etc. who came before us.

The second was when I was at physical therapy. The therapist told me about a now-retired therapist who gave her many “tricks of the trade” to help patients that she was never taught when she went to school.

The third time was in a conversation I had with a tow operator who lost his dad and said, “I truly miss working wrecks with my dad, something not many understand. Sacrifice and suffering together creating strength.”

Personally, I am grateful for the dedication, leadership, contributions and wisdom of the tow ladies who came before me. They paved the way not only for me, but for all women in the towing industry — especially in gaining the respect we deserve.

Who knew shoulders carried so much more meaning than a part of the body?

This article by Geri Roskoph first appeared on Tow Times.

Simplified Employee Pension (SEP) Programs: A Flexible Retirement Solution for Small Businesses

A Simplified Employee Pension (SEP) program is a retirement savings plan designed to help small businesses and self-employed individuals provide retirement benefits to employees while minimizing administrative complexity and costs. Established under federal tax law, SEP plans offer employers a straightforward way to contribute to retirement accounts on behalf of eligible employees, making them an attractive alternative to more complex retirement plans.

One of the primary advantages of a SEP program is its simplicity. Unlike traditional pension plans or many employer-sponsored retirement programs, SEP plans require minimal paperwork and ongoing administration. Employers establish SEP accounts for eligible employees, and contributions are made directly into individual retirement accounts known as SEP-IRAs. These accounts are owned and controlled by the employees, allowing them to manage their investments according to their retirement goals and risk tolerance.

SEP plans are particularly beneficial for small businesses because they provide flexibility in annual contributions. Employers are not required to contribute every year. Instead, they can decide how much to contribute based on the financial performance of the business. During profitable years, employers may contribute a larger percentage of employee compensation, while contributions can be reduced or skipped entirely during periods of economic difficulty. This flexibility

helps businesses maintain retirement benefits without creating a fixed financial obligation.

Another significant benefit of SEP programs is their favorable tax treatment. Employer contributions are generally tax-deductible as a business expense, reducing the employer’s taxable income. Employees do not pay taxes on employer contributions until funds are withdrawn during retirement. The investments within SEP-IRAs grow on a tax-deferred basis, allowing retirement savings to accumulate more efficiently over time.

To participate in a SEP plan, employees must generally meet certain eligibility requirements established by the employer and permitted under federal regulations. These requirements often include minimum age and service thresholds. Once eligible, employees receive contributions from the employer based on a uniform percentage of compensation. Employers must contribute the same percentage of pay for all eligible employees, ensuring fairness and compliance with plan rules.

SEP programs also offer higher contribution limits than many traditional individual retirement accounts (IRAs). This feature is particularly valuable for self-employed individuals and small business owners who want to maximize retirement

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From the Executive Director

As you can see from this issue, there is a lot going on in the PTROI. Let us start with the TopGolf outing. Last year was our first year at TopGolf. We did not know what to expect, but the turnout was great. This is a great family event! If you have never been to a TopGolf, everyone can walk around and talk to each other compared to a golf outing where you only see each other before and after the event. So, get your crew together and but a “bay”. It is \$575.00 for 6 people. This includes golf food and 2 drink tickets each. Make your reservation today at 800-286-0519.

We are looking for a PTROI Secretary and also for a director. Please consider this and give me a call at 800-286-0519 and we can talk about the particular duties required. You can see the front page of this issue for more.

This year we are holding the officers’ elections we are looking for President, 1st vice-president, 2nd vice-

president, Secretary and Treasurer nominations. You can nominate yourself or somebody else. Nominations need to be in to the PTROI office by August 15, 2026. Email nominations to office@ptroi.com.

Next week I will be planning zone meetings. I hope to start them in late September or early October and cover the entire state before the snow falls. There are some areas I have not been to in a long time and I going all over the state. These meetings are full of information regarding new or potential laws in Illinois, as well as what is happening at the Federal level. We Also will try to assist you with local problems you may have.

Enjoy the rest of the summer stay safe.

Until next month, Ed

A Tip From EVSafe



Michael Klimkosky • You
Founder, EVsafe for Responders
now •

A very practical and simple thing for responders to be aware of during EV recovery incidents:

EVsafe
2m •

If anybody attempts to drag an EV using one of the four lift points underneath the car for any reason, stop immediately. Lift points are for lifting, not dragging with a J hook.

This is a very bad practice that's costly and 100% avoidable.



Lien processing as easy as 1-2-3!



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DirectPost-Office from Auto Data Direct allows you to create, mail, and track your certified lien letters online! Reduce the time, effort, and expense of searching for records and going to the post office.

- **DMV Database Records** – Access real-time owner and lienholder records in 38+ states – more than any other company of its kind!
- **Title Check Reports** – Obtain vehicles’ current state of title.
- **State-Specific Lien Letter Tools** – Your lien notification letter will be automatically filled out with the owner, lienholder, and title information from our inquiry tools.



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Dangerous truck companies keep restarting under new names

Every year, over 5,000 people die in commercial truck crashes across the United States. While many are tragic accidents, a disturbing number involve “chameleon carriers”—unsafe trucking fleets that dodge federal penalties by simply changing their names. And despite years of warnings, the regulatory loophole allowing them to operate remains wide open.

Chameleon Carriers

The mechanism is straightforward. When a commercial carrier racks up a large number of safety violations, out-of-service orders, or crippling fines, the operators don’t pay up. Instead, they fold the company. Days later, the exact same trucks, drivers, and management apply for a new Department of Transportation (DOT) number. For roughly \$1,000, they buy a clean slate. Repeat offenses aren’t a byproduct of the system; they are the underlying business model.

The sheer scale of “Semi-gate”, as I like to call it, was recently laid bare by CBS’s 60 Minutes. In an eight-month-long investigation, correspondent Bill Whitaker exposed Super Ego Holding, a sprawling transport network operating between the U.S. and Serbia. The investigation revealed an operation where overseas agents routinely hacked electronic logging devices, allowing drivers to push past legal exhaustion limits. When the regulatory heat turned up, whistleblowers testified that management ordered drivers to literally slap duct tape over old company logos to display newly minted DOT numbers. The barrier to entry for this game? An internet connection and a nominal registration fee, entirely avoiding meaningful safety audits.

Are American Motorists Safe?

For the American motorist, the repercussions are severe. The 60 Minutes episode referred to industry analytics firm Fusable’s research, which notes that these reincarnated fleets are four times more likely to trigger severe collisions than legitimate new operators. The numbers connected to the Super Ego network alone are chilling: nearly 15,000 safety violations and 500 crashes in just two years.

Federal Action

These figures have finally triggered federal action. Super Ego is now the subject of an active federal investigation, and lawmakers recently introduced the SAFE Act (H.R. 7539) to force the FMCSA to implement automated screening to block chameleon applicants at the door. Yet, Washington has known about this for over a decade. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) first flagged the chameleon carrier crisis in 2012, citing crash data stretching back to 2005. The root



problem is simple math. The FMCSA employs roughly 350 investigators to police over 700,000 motor carriers. It takes months of legal maneuvering to shut down a dangerous fleet, but only a few weeks to register a new one online.

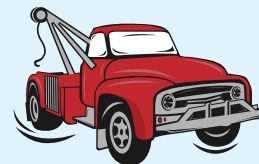
The freight industry runs on razor-thin margins. Until regulators mandate rigorous physical vetting over digital paperwork, bad actors will keep exploiting the system because it is cheaper to rebrand than to repair brakes and let drivers sleep.

For the everyday commuter, your best defense is distance. Maintain a wide berth around battered rigs, especially those sporting fresh, hastily applied DOT decals over older paint or duct-taped doors. The company name might only be a week old, but the heavy machinery—and the exhausted driver behind the wheel—could be harboring a long, dangerous, and unresolved past.

This article first appeared in Autoblog.

Help your association grow.

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SAVE THE DATE!



TOPGOLF *Outing*



**SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 20,
2026**



**PRE-REGISTRATION
REQUIRED
START TIME
4:00 PM**



**TOPGOLF
2050 PROGRESS PKWY
SCHAUMBURG, IL**

★ REGISTRATION PRICING ★



BAY (UP TO 6 PLAYERS)

\$575



INDIVIDUAL GOLFER

\$125



DINNER & DRINK TICKET

\$65

≡ NO GOLF EXPERIENCE REQUIRED! ≡

Bring your family, coworkers, customers, or friends for an afternoon of networking, food, friendly competition, and fun!



FOOD



GAMES



PRIZES



RAFFLES



NETWORKING



Great People. Great Times. Stronger Together.



MORE THAN JUST GOLF

AN AFTERNOON OF CONNECTION, COMPETITION & FUN!

One of PTROI's goals is creating opportunities for members to connect outside of meetings and training classes. Last year's first-ever Topgolf outing proved to be one of our most enjoyable events of the year!

Topgolf is designed for everyone—not just golfers. The computerized games make it easy for beginners and experienced players to compete together while enjoying food, drinks, and great conversation.

Whether you're bringing your spouse, employees, customers, or simply looking to spend an afternoon with others in the towing and recovery industry, this event offers something for everyone.



“
GREAT PEOPLE.
GREAT TIMES.
STRONGER
TOGETHER.
”

5 REASONS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS PTROI'S TOPGOLF OUTING!



NO GOLF EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Topgolf is fun and easy for everyone!



NETWORK WITH TOWERS FROM ACROSS ILLINOIS

Build relationships that make a difference.



GREAT FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Enjoy delicious food and your favorite drinks.



AMAZING RAFFLE PRIZES & GIVEAWAYS

Win great prizes throughout the afternoon!



FUN, FRIENDLY COMPETITION FOR ALL

Games for all skill levels and ages.

LAST YEAR WAS A HIT!

We had an outstanding turnout during our first Topgolf. Members from across Illinois came together to reconnect with old friends, meet new people, and enjoy an afternoon away from work. The positive feedback made it an easy decision to bring the event back in 2026!



NEW THIS YEAR!

We're planning even more raffle prizes, giveaways, friendly competitions, and opportunities to win throughout the afternoon!



BRING YOUR TEAM!

Invite your office staff, dispatchers, drivers, family members, customers, insurance partners, vendors—anyone you'd enjoy spending an afternoon with. Topgolf is about building relationships while having fun!



Mark your calendar and plan to be there!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026 • TOPGOLF SCHAUMBURG

PRE-REGISTRATION REQUIRED • START TIME: 4:00 PM

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PROTECT
YOUR FAMILY

PROTECT
FIRST
RESPONDERS



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The “Move Over” law is crucial for the safety of first responders on the road. When an emergency vehicle is stopped with lights flashing, please change lanes if possible or slow down to a safe speed.

All 50 states have these laws, yet many drivers remain unaware of their existence.

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- Rear Lower Work lights
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- All units come with Fire Extinguisher, Wireless Tow Light, Triangles, 8-Point Tie Downs.
- Colors available from Black, White, Patriot Blue, Race Red, Granite Crystal, Billet Silver and More

HEAVIES

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- Kenworth & Peterbilt.
- Stocked with shackle kits & chain kits
- Automatic and manuals

WRECKERS

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- MPL-40, MPL-NG, MPL-NGS – New and old body style available
- 4X4 & 4X2 available. 22 head LED federal signal Lightbar S/T/T
- Diesel, and Gas available.
- All units come with Fire Extinguisher, Triangles, Wireless Tow Light, (2) basket straps & (2) ratchets, (2) tire spacers and hitch plate w/2pins



CATCH US @ UPCOMING EVENTS

Midwest Ohio Tow Show: Sept 12th-15th Wilmington, OH
Special Olympics Truck Convoy: Oct 12th Tinley Park, IL
Tow Trucks For Tots: Nov 10th Joliet, IL
Baltimore Tow Show: Nov 21-23 Baltimore, MD

Jury convicts man of negligent homicide, not manslaughter, in crash that killed Utah CEO

OGDEN — A jury has convicted a tow truck driver charged in the death of a Utah business executive and his daughter, but on lesser charges than prosecutors sought. The eight-person jury on Friday found Michael Love, 53, guilty of two counts of negligent homicide, a class A misdemeanor, in the deaths of Richard Hendrickson, 57, and his daughter Sally Hendrickson, 16, in a July 6, 2024, crash on Ogden Canyon Road east of Ogden. Weber County prosecutors had sought convictions for manslaughter, a second-degree felony, in the deaths.

The jurors also found Love guilty of aggravated assault, a second-degree felony, stemming from nonfatal injuries suffered in the crash by Mollie Hendrickson, also a daughter of Richard Hendrickson. They also found him guilty of two counts of obstruction of justice, one of them a third-degree felony, the other a class A misdemeanor, stemming from his actions after the crash to cover up the missteps that led to the incident.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- A jury found Michael Love guilty of negligent homicide, a misdemeanor, in the 2024 crash that killed Richard Hendrickson and his daughter.
- Prosecutors had sought convictions on more serious counts of manslaughter, a felony.
- Love was hauling a bulldozer through the Ogden Canyon when it slipped off the tow truck he was driving, smashing into the Hendrickson car.

He’s been jailed since October 2024 and is to be sentenced on April 21.

Love was hauling a 31,000-pound bulldozer when the piece of machinery, improperly secured, slid off his tow truck as he negotiated a curve in the narrow canyon road, falling onto the oncoming vehicle driven by Richard Hendrickson. The force of the bulldozer sheared off the top of the Hendrickson vehicle, causing the two deaths and injuring the younger Hendrickson.

Richard Hendrickson had served as CEO of Clearfield-based Lifetime Products since 2013. He, his wife and three of the couple’s four children had spent the morning boating at Pineview Reservoir and were on their way home when the tragedy occurred.

Love took the stand on Thursday, the last day of testimony, taking responsibility for his role in the matter. The bulldozer had been secured to the bed of the tow truck, but an employee unhooked it to clean it, not properly securing it afterward, according to Love. He thought it was secured, Love said, but acknowledged he didn’t check before heading on the trip that would take him along Ogden Canyon Road.

“I should’ve done my job. It’s my fault,” Love said. “I ruined people’s lives because I didn’t check it.” Defense attorney Greg Skordas had pressed for a conviction on the lesser charge, negligent homicide, in closing arguments on Thursday. “We’re not asking for him to be excused. I’m asking you to put this in perspective,” he said.

Manslaughter involves acting “recklessly” in causing the death of another while negligent homicide involves

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“criminal negligence” that leads to a death. In arguing for the lesser charge, Skordas said Love didn’t travel along the Ogden Canyon Road thinking he could kill somebody. “Michael wanted nothing more than to get that (bulldozer) up there safely,” he said.

Deputy Weber County attorney Branden Miles, however, said the tragedy was foreseeable in pressing for a manslaughter conviction in his closing arguments. “It was totally foreseeable, totally avoidable ... and totally in Michael Love’s control,” he said.

Miles noted the many shortcomings in how the bulldozer was loaded, despite Love’s experience as a tow truck driver. It was too heavy by more than 4,000 pounds for the

trailer it sat on, and the trailer was too high for the bulldozer, creating balance issues. Notably, it should have been secured at four points, not one point plus the winch, which he said doesn’t count as an attachment point, per tow truck guidelines. Moreover, the metal tracks of the bulldozer on the metal top of the trailer, he added, allowed for slippage.

That the tow truck came off is no one’s fault but Love’s, he said, “and it goes against all of the training.” Love had been in the tow truck business for 17 years.

The obstruction of justice convictions stem from Love’s actions and comments after the crash. He placed chains on the bed of his truck in the immediate aftermath of the crash as if to make it appear the bulldozer had been secured at several points, prompting the felony obstruction count. He misled law enforcement officials about how the bulldozer had been secured, leading to the misdemeanor obstruction count.

The trial started on March 6, and jurors started deliberating Friday morning. Judge Craig Hall had instructed jurors to consider both manslaughter and negligent homicide charges as part of their deliberations.

This article originated at KSL.com in Utah.

(SEP) Programs cont’d from page 3

savings. Higher contribution limits allow participants to accumulate substantial retirement assets while benefiting from tax advantages.

Despite their many advantages, SEP plans have some limitations. Employees cannot make salary deferral contributions as they can with certain other retirement plans, such as 401(k) plans. Additionally, because employers must contribute the same percentage of compensation for all eligible employees, contribution costs can increase as the workforce grows. Businesses seeking more customized retirement benefit structures may find other plan types more suitable.

In conclusion, Simplified Employee Pension programs provide an effective and accessible retirement savings option for small businesses and self-employed individuals. Their ease of administration, flexible contribution structure, and tax benefits make them a popular choice for organizations seeking to support employee retirement security. By offering a SEP plan, employers can enhance employee financial well-being while maintaining the flexibility needed to manage business finances effectively.

Consult your accountant for more advice.

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Towing + Transport

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FOR THE TOWING &
RECOVERY INDUSTRY**

connect with us!


Ask how our experts can provide superior, custom solutions to help control your costs, manage risk, and reduce losses.

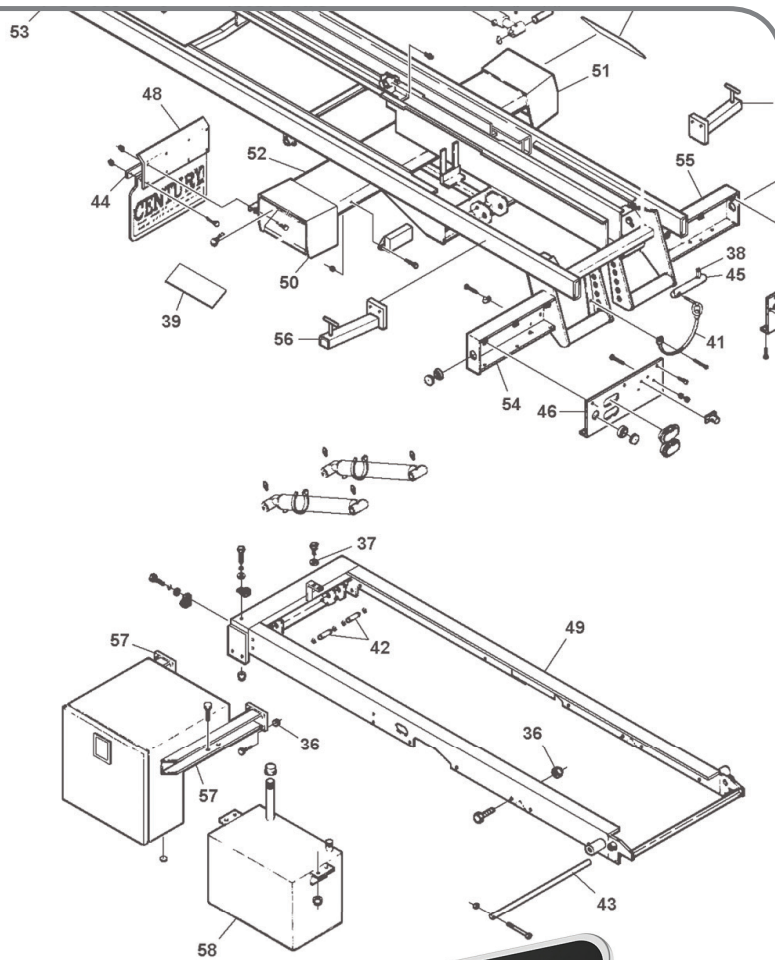


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Hot Weather Safety Checklist

Drink water before you're thirsty.

Keep bottled water and electrolyte drinks in service vehicles.

Take short cooling breaks during long recoveries whenever possible.

Watch your coworkers for signs of heat stress.

Wear sunscreen, sunglasses, and appropriate clothing.

Never ignore dizziness, confusion, or muscle cramps.

If someone shows signs of heat illness, move them to a cool area, provide fluids if they're able to drink, and seek medical attention when necessary.

2026 Officers Election

The 2026 PTROI Officer's election will be held In October. If you have any interest in becoming an officer you must file your nomination by August 15, 2026. Email your nomination to office@ptroi.com along with the position you are seeking. Available are the positions of President, 1st vice-president, 2nd vice-president, Secretary and Treasurer.

Taking Care of Employee's Health in Hot Weather

Hot weather can have a significant impact on employees' health, safety, and productivity, especially for those who work outdoors or in environments without adequate cooling. High temperatures increase the risk of dehydration, heat exhaustion, and heatstroke, all of which can lead to serious health complications if not addressed promptly. Employers have a responsibility to create a safe and healthy workplace by implementing measures that protect workers from excessive heat.

One of the most important ways to safeguard employees is by ensuring they stay well hydrated. Workers should have easy access to clean, cool drinking water throughout the day and be encouraged to drink water regularly, even if they do not feel thirsty.

Providing adequate rest breaks is another essential strategy. If your employees are performing a difficult recovery or other strenuous activity in hot conditions, they should be given frequent breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas to allow their bodies to cool down. Adjusting work schedules, if practical in our industry, by assigning physically demanding tasks during the cooler hours of the morning or evening can further reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses.

Appropriate clothing also plays an important role in staying safe during hot weather. Employers should encourage workers to wear lightweight, light-colored, and breathable clothing whenever possible. Ideally, outdoor employees should also wear wide-brimmed hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen to protect themselves from harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays, which can cause sunburn and increase the risk of skin cancer. But again, depending on the situation, this is not always practical.

Training and awareness are equally important. Employees and supervisors should be educated about the symptoms of heat-related illnesses, including dizziness, excessive sweating, muscle cramps, weakness, nausea, confusion, and fainting. Recognizing these warning signs early allows for immediate action, such as moving the affected person to a cool place, providing water, and seeking medical attention if symptoms become severe.

Employers should also monitor weather conditions and issue heat alerts when temperatures or humidity levels become dangerously high. During heat waves, additional precautions such as increasing the frequency of breaks, rotating employees between demanding and lighter tasks, and reducing workloads can help prevent heat stress. Special attention should be given to new employees, older workers, and those with existing medical conditions, as they may be more vulnerable to heat-related illnesses.

Creating a comfortable indoor work environment is equally important. Air conditioning systems should be maintained regularly, and fans or proper ventilation should be used where air conditioning is unavailable. Employers should also encourage employees to report any signs of overheating or unsafe working conditions without fear of negative consequences.

Taking care of employee health during hot weather benefits both you and your business. Healthy employees are more productive, make fewer mistakes, and are less likely to suffer workplace accidents or require time off due to illness. By promoting hydration, providing rest breaks, ensuring proper training, and maintaining a safe work environment, employers can significantly reduce the risks associated with high temperatures.

Protecting employees from hot weather is not only a legal and ethical responsibility but also a smart business practice. If your team is doing a lengthy recovery, have someone bring a cooler of cold water, Gatorade or other electrolyte out to the scene. It will be well worth it. Simple preventive measures can make a substantial difference in reducing heat-related illnesses and creating a safer, healthier, and more productive workplace for everyone.

We want **YOUR PHOTOS!**



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