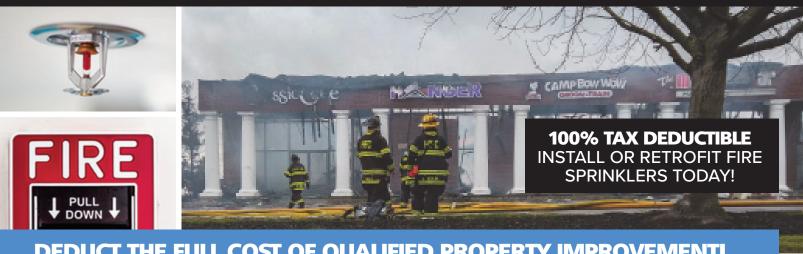


DON'T LET YOUR BUSINESS GO UP IN FLAMES!



DEDUCT THE FULL COST OF QUALIFIED PROPERTY IMPROVEMENT!

CARES ACT

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act closed a loophole that was included in the TCJA by making QIP 15-year property. This change made businesses of all sizes, regardless of the amounts spent on equipment, eligible to deduct the full cost of commercial fire sprinkler systems using bonus depreciation.

The time is now to upgrade your building's fire safety with a fire sprinkler system or a sprinkler retrofit. Under the new Section 179 guidelines, the one year deduction period phases out after 2022. Any new sprinkler system or retrofit completed between September 27, 2017 and December 31, 2022 will be able to be fully expensed in one year. After 2022, the allowed deduction percentage is as follows:

2023: 80% 2025: 40% 2021: 100% 2024: 60% 2022: 100% 2026: 20%

2027 and after: The depreciation schedule becomes permanently set at 15 years.

WHAT IS QIP?

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA), passed in December, 2017, gave small businesses the ability to deduct the full cost of Qualified Improvement Property (QIP) up to \$1.04 million in the year of installation using Section 179.

QIP is defined as improvements to the interior of an existing building that is not residential property. Commercial fire sprinkler systems, including upgrades of existing systems or retrofitting in existing structures, are considered QIP.

The Section 179 deduction is not phased out over time. However, there is a phase out of the amount allowed as a deduction based on a maximum spending amount of \$2.59 million on equipment in a year. Businesses that spend over that amount will see a dollar for dollar reduction of their eligible deduction. So a business that spends \$3.63 million or more on equipment in a given year would not be allowed any Section 179 Deduction.

WHAT HAS CHANGED?

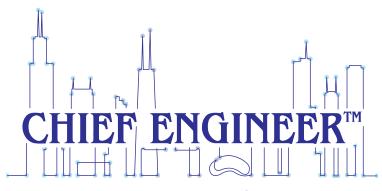
Prior to the TCJA allowing Section 179 on qualified improvement property, including sprinkler systems, property of this type was only allowed a deduction on a straight line basis over a period of 39 years. In other words, a company spending \$390,000 on a commercial sprinkler system prior to the TCJA would only deduct \$10,000 per year for 39 years.

While many believe that the intention of Congress was to make Qualified Improvement Property 15-year property, which would have made this property eligible for bonus depreciation, the TCJA left the life of this property at 39 years. So, a taxpayer who did not elect to use the Section 179 Deduction or who has that deduction phased out would have been left to depreciate the remaining balance of the assets over a 39-year period.

Neither of these deductions is currently available for fire sprinkler systems installed in residential high rises. The National Fire Sprinkler Association (NFSA) continues to fight to obtain incentives for residential structures.

For more information on how these tax incentives might impact the business of your contractors, we would recommend that they contact their tax professionals, as situations differ based on the facts and circumstances for each business. As a general rule, we would not recommend that the Local provide tax advice to the contractors.





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Troubleshooting: Priming in Your Boilers

This month, as we anticipate the colder months ahead, we take a brief refresher on what to do about priming in your boilers

Boiler Room Modernization: Key Considerations When Transitioning to Eco-Friendly Electric Boilers Rise to a Higher Level of Training

In older commercial buildings, switching to electric boilers from naturalgas-fired boilers brings with it environmental and other advantages.

Expectation for Identification Products Shifts to Lifetime Readability

It's such a simple thing, but when identity tags for safety weather through time or the elements, not being able to read them can cause real problems.

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Dear Members,

How quickly summer passes us by. It seems like only a few weeks since we were last together at Guaranteed Rate Field watching the White Sox play, and here we are on the cusp of our 83rd Annual Golf Outing at Cog Hill in Lemont. As usual, we have quite a massive turnout for this event, with nearly 800 golfers registered for the 9:00am shotgun start on Friday, Sept. 8. I personally would like to extend my thanks on behalf of all of the Chief Engineers to Kevin Kenzinger and Brendan Winters for taking the lead of our Golf Outing Committee, and to Alex Boerner for coming back to help us out once again. We're confident that the weather will behave for us as it so often has in years past. I personally look forward to seeing all of you out there on the course.



We would like to beg everyone's pardon for the erratic arrival of your monthly magazine of the Chief Engineer magazine. We appreciate your patience as we establish new routines and challenges. We hope to have everything ironed out by November. For now, we ask for your continued understanding for just a bit longer, as we strive to pull everything together as efficiently as we can.

On that note, please let me remind all of you Chief Engineers — Active and Associate Members alike — that if you're engaged in a particularly interesting project, be it a retrofit, new installation, structural maintenance or anything else that could be of interest to our readership, to please get in touch with our editor, Karl J. Paloucek, at kjpaloucek@gmail. com. He'll be glad to contact you about your story and to help spread the word about the work you're doing to the rest of the organization. Likewise, if you have someone on your staff who is not yet a chief engineer, but who is taking great strides in the field, we want to know — email our editor at the email address above, and we'll feature them as part of our Up & Coming section.

With the arrival of fall, many of us naturally start thinking about the fast-approaching holidays, but before then, we have our annual Oktoberfest meeting. This year's meeting will take place Wednesday, Oct. 18, at 5:00pm at Bridge 410, 410 N. Paulina St., Chicago. As usual, there will be dinner, beer, wine, and plenty of *Gemütlichkeit*, so don't forget to register soon. You won't want to miss this one!

As always, let's keep the members of our military and our first responders in our thoughts as we head into this new year of monthly Chief Engineer events. We appreciate the sacrifices they make daily to ensure our safety and way of life.

See you out at Cog Hill!

Sincerely,

Ken Botta



ASHRAE, along with seven partnering organizations, announced that it has been awarded a \$2.85 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy Building Technologies Office for Resilient and Efficient Codes Implementation (RECI). RECI is a product of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which provides an opportunity to advance the efficiency and resilience of buildings through successfully implementing updated energy codes in states and local jurisdictions throughout the United States.

The program invests \$225 million over 5 years, encompassing fiscal years (FYs) 2022 through 2026, to "enable sustained cost-effective implementation of updated building energy codes."

The award will fund the "Energy Code Official - Training & Education Collaborative" (ECO-TEC), a project led by national model code organizations ASHRAE and the International Code Council (ICC), with vital support from the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) and agencies from the states of Oregon, Michigan, New Jersey and West Virginia.

The ECO-TEC will increase energy code enforcement activities through a multi-module training targeted to building energy code officials (ECOs). An important component of the project will include connecting with disadvantaged and rural communities through new communication channels to expand

the workforce and providing career opportunities to those populations through training stipends.

The impacts from the project are expected to save the four state partners approximately \$18.5 million over the course of the project. This impact reflects the difference between "Standard" and "Improved" compliance and assumes that the partner states adopt the latest model energy codes. The potential savings for 48 states — minus California and Washington — with "Improved" to "Aggressive Compliance" using their current codes range between \$12 to \$41 million in year one and \$149 to \$335 million by year five. "Improved" to "Aggressive Compliance" would also prevent between 0.06 MMT (million metric tons) to 0.20 MMT of CO2 emissions in year one and 0.81 MMT to 1.77 MMT of CO2 in year five. Program effectiveness will be evaluated to ensure sustained compliance and impacts.

"The ECO-TEC will significantly contribute to advancing energy efficiency and resilience in our buildings, ultimately leading to a more sustainable future," Jeff Littleton, Executive Vice President, ASHRAE and Principal Investigator of the ECO-TEC, said. "By empowering code officials and professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills, we can effectively transform the built environment and promote sustainable practices nationwide. We are thrilled to partner on this important project."







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At FiltXPO™: The Filtration Summit for Global Change

FiltXPOTM 2023 will feature the second edition of the Filtration Summit for Global Change, with five panels of industry leaders addressing today's critical societal challenges and sessions focused on market trends and technology reviews. The panels will include global leaders who will debate, collaborate, and bring new ideas to light.

The five panels will include:

- Indoor Air Quality
 Join an insightful exchange for the right solutions to IAQ challenges.
- Filtration Sustainability

Gain market intelligence on components' recyclability and biodegradability.

- Critical Air
 Hear how experts provide evidence of filtration
- Non-Optional Standards
 Discover the right filtration standards for your applications.
- Technology Review
 Find up-to-the-minute technologies that track filtration quality.

Filter Media Training Course Available

Also available at FiltXPO 2023 will be a 1 ½-day ultimate overview of existing and emerging nonwoven technologies for filtration. The course will take place Monday, Oct. 9, from 9:00am-6:00pm, and Tuesday, Oct. 10, from 9:00am-12:00pm. It's an intensive course designed for professionals wanting to learn more about the development, testing and application of nonwovens in filtration. Only 40 participants are being accepted into this career-changing course. A comprehensive guide of instruction and reference material will be provided to each attendee.

For more information about FiltXPO 2023 or to register, visit www.filtxpo.com/registration.html



Chicago Build 2023

Oct. 11-12 McCormick Center, Chicago

Chicago Build is set for a huge return to McCormick Place. The event features hundreds of exhibitors, 400+ speakers, AIA CES workshops, a Festival of Construction, exclusive free-to-attend networking events including Meet the Buyer, Women in Construction and Diversity in Construction, entertainment, live music and much, much more. Chicago Build is the ultimate platform for networking and connecting with thousands of senior-level decision-makers, buyers and influencers from across the Midwest's entire AEC industry.

Among the available tracks at Chicago Build 2023 will be the Facilities Management & Real Estate Track & Workshops, which attract thousands of realtors and FM professionals from across the Midwest to learn of the latest technology, innovation and developments from leading industry experts. Attendees will gain access to hundreds of high-level speakers across the two days, plus AIA CES-accredited training workshops and interactive panel discussions with leading architects, contractors, engineers, government and more.

For more information or to register, visit chicagobuildexpo.com



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Water Research Team Completes Pioneering Nutrient Removal Study

A team consisting of WSSC Water, Brown and Caldwell, and Northwestern University has published research to revolutionize cost-effective, environment-safe nutrient removal at water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs). The \$300,000 research project, Demonstration of Progressive Carbon Efficient Nitrogen with Biological Phosphorus Removal in a Conventional BNR Facility, funded by The Water Research Foundation (WRF), sought to study lowering operating costs of biological nutrient removal (BNR) systems while fully utilizing existing infrastructure.

Introduced in the 1970s, BNR techniques have been subject to scrutiny due to high energy demand, reliance on external chemicals, and economic and environmental sustainability concerns. Given these challenges, many utilities worldwide operating conventional BNR facilities are in dire need of innovative alternatives to meet stringent nutrient limits.

To this end, full-scale research at WSSC Water's 26-million-gallons-per-day Seneca WRRF in Montgomery County, Md., addressed this need by demonstrating how efficient management of influent carbon, coupled with simultaneous nitrification and denitrification and post-anoxic denitrification, can reduce both energy and chemical usage while still meeting nutrient standards.

By utilizing ammonia-based aeration control to maximize influent carbon utilization rather than aerobic oxidation, the facility decreased its energy use by lowering the aeration demand and blower runtimes, and reduced the need to purchase additional carbon for denitrification, thus lowering its carbon footprint.

Furthermore, the research revealed that low-dissolved oxygen conditions can effectively facilitate combined biological nitrogen and phosphorus removal, thereby reducing the need for high-volume mixed liquor recycling, usually as high as four times the WRRF's flow.

Through this demonstration process and subsequent full-scale implementation, the Seneca WRRF is on track to save its annual energy and chemical costs by approximately \$575,000 as it continues to meet nutrient removal requirements.

WSSC Water is considering deploying the innovative costsaving strategies throughout its other five WRRFs to maintain affordable and sustainable service for its 1.9 million customers.

"We congratulate WSSC Water for their unwavering commitment to providing safe and reliable water to its customers and returning clean water to local waterways," said Brown and Caldwell's Dr. Pusker Regmi, a principal research investigator. "This study is a game changer for the water industry as we collaborate with utilities and academia to find the most effective, sustainable, and economical ways to enhance nutrient removal practices while protecting the environment."



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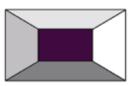
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On average, patients have nothing to do for up to 60 percent of their time in a hospital. That is why BEAR Construction's BEAR Cares recently hosted a Busy BEAR Time-Filler Drive with its employees, collecting books, activity-based toys and self-contained arts and crafts to donate to Ascension Saint Alexius Child Life.

On Thursday, July 27, a team from BEAR's healthcare group delivered the donations to the Ascension Saint Alexius Women and Children's Hospital in Hoffman Estates, where they put their project management skills to use helping some younger patients work on various projects.

"We had a great time celebrating Christmas in July," BEAR Project Team Supervisor Michele Falk said. "The kids were so sweet, and we enjoyed passing out toys, creating holiday crafts, sharing some giggles and tasting some sweet treats. I don't know who had more fun, the kids or us."

Michele is a core member of BEAR Cares, an employee-driven initiative that organizes and participates in various outreach programs, fundraising events, donation activities and other forms of volunteerism.

Thanks go out to the many generous BEAR employees who donated so many wonderful items to the cause, as well as to all of the BEAR personnel who also donated their time.



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For the second year in a row, the SERVPRO Annual Convention Golf Tournament raised funds to benefit brand partner First Responder Children's Foundation (FRCF). This year's event more than doubled last year's donation, raising a total of \$53,970.

More than 150 golfers from across the SERVPRO franchise system participated in the sold-out event held at TPC Tampa Bay in Lutz, Fla. The tournament helped kick off SERVPRO's 54th Convention.

"Each year, the Convention Golf Tournament is a great way to kick off the week by reconnecting and sharing fellowship with members of the SERVPRO system," said SERVPRO CEO Rick Isaacson. "Add in the competition, the camaraderie, and the fact that it was all for a great cause, and this year's tournament was one of the best yet."

"First Responders Children's Foundation is profoundly grateful to SERVPRO and its dedicated franchisees for their unwavering commitment to supporting U.S. first responders and their families," said Jillian Crane, President & CEO of FRCF. "Throughout our journey together, SERVPRO has shown incredible support through scholarships, financial hardship grants, and National First Responder Day events. ... FRCF deeply values its partnership with SERVPRO and cherishes the opportunity to stand alongside them, both on the golf links and in our shared mission of serving those who serve us."



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Troubleshooting: Priming in Your Boilers

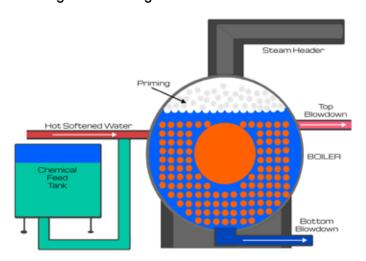
As summer comes to a close and we're busy preparing our boilers for their challenging months ahead, it's not a bad time to review some of what we look for and try to prevent some of the problems we encounter in their general maintenance — like priming. Priming, as you know, refers to the phenomenon in which droplets of water are carried along with the steam, forming wet steam. Left unattended, a boiler suffering from priming can lead to all sorts of problems, from a reduction in steam quality to damaged valves or other equipment, corrosion or scaling, and even elevated risk of explosion.

The reasons priming occurs can be highly varied, from having too high a water level in the boiler, to faulty construction of the boiler itself. Sometimes, impurities in the water itself are to blame, or wildly fluctuations in the demand for steam. Whatever is causing the priming to occur, it's typically going to fall under one of two categories — a mechanical problem or a chemical one. Identifying the nature of the problem and what to do about it depends on what you're seeing. Some mechanical issues, like improper boiler construction, will require more drastic measures, like replacement of the unit, but in many cases, the fix will be much more manageable — but no less important.

You might be seeing: The presence of mineral deposits on the valves, which can lead to overheating and corrosion. This is more of a chemical problem, stemming from the presence of organic matter in the boiler water.

Solution: Ensuring the maintenance of low levels of salts in the water will prevent deposits that can lead to harmful corrosion and greater system damage. Efficient filtration of the boiler water will help reduce the amount of impurities in the system in general, as will periodically blowing off any sludge found in the system to prevent further accretion and contamination.

You might be seeing: A sudden fluctuation in steam



If you encounter priming in your boiler system, don't wait — fixing the problem now will save plenty of time, money and aggravation in repairs later on.

demanded from your boiler. This is an issue that can arise from having too high a level of water in your boiler. While it's normal to see some fluctuation of the water visible in the gauge glass, if you're seeing the water line bounce more than an inch or so, that's a good indication of surge that needs to be addressed. Unattended, the water agitation can cause the water feeder to open and close unnecessarily, leading to a flooded boiler. Surge can result in inefficient boiler operation, poor heating and increased heating bills — and unhappy tenants.

Solution: If you're seeing priming or foaming, your water either could have dirt or oil in it, or the pH level of the water might be too high. If you've checked your water and it seems to be OK, the next step would be to check the flame, and its size and proximity to the combustion chamber. If it's too big or too close, this could cause the excessive boiling that you're seeing. If it's neither of these issues, check to ensure that the pipes leading away from the boiler are properly sized according to the boiler manufacturer's instructions.

You might be seeing: Soap-like structures in your boiler water. If your boiler water is contaminated with alkalis and oils, such as those used for boiler lubrication, these can emulsify and produce a chemical reaction that will form what is essentially soap, which inherently decreases the surface tension, which in turn creates a cycle that produces more foam — a direct result of lowering surface tension in your boiler water.

Solution: Anti-foaming agents, like castor oil, can be added to neutralize the effects of the lowering surface tension. Filtering and treating water prior to its introduction into the boiler system is another method that can remove oils and alkalis before they have a chance to commingle in your boiler. You can also try adding sodium aluminates to the water, as they have proved effective at trapping oil drops and keeping them from emulsifying with any alkalis in the system.

Whenever you encounter priming in your boiler system, it's important to address the problem as soon as possible. If you can't tackle the problem on your own, don't wait — call a boiler service professional. Whatever reluctance you have in terms of your budget, it's not going to be nearly as expensive as it will down the road if you decide to defer your boiler repairs.



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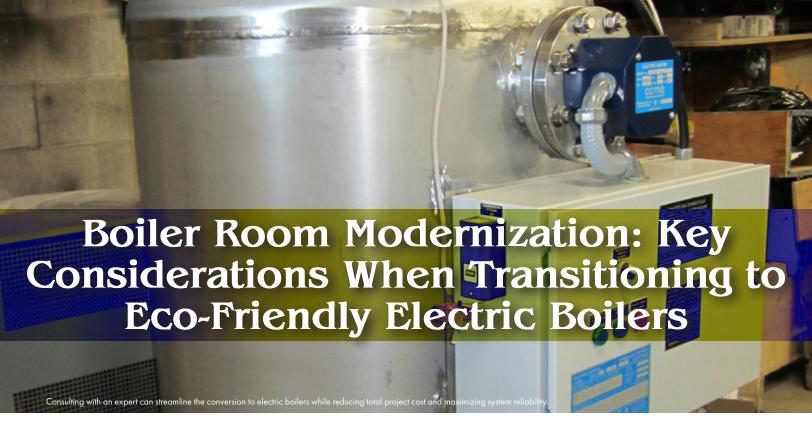
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To address climate change, states and cities are increasingly phasing out fossil fuel use in commercial buildings in favor of clean, green electric options. Today, a common goal is the conversion of aging buildings to accommodate eco-friendly electric boilers that provide hot water to tenants.

Switching to electric boilers promotes better health as well. Besides the notorious greenhouse gases, carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4), natural gas-fired boilers and furnaces emit dangerous nitrogen oxides (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), and nitrous oxide (N2O), as well as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), sulfur dioxide (SO2), and particulate matter (PM).

When upgrading to commercial electric boilers in space-constrained urban areas, however, there are several important issues to consider before commercial property managers and the buildings' boards of directors can decide on the simplest, most cost-effective option for any retrofit project.

"Among the challenges are the facts that every building to be retrofitted is different, managers often lack mechanical or heating system experience, and engineers can be unfamiliar with electric boiler design. Because of this, many need expert guidance on how to proceed with the conversion from gasfired to electric, including the basic requirements and other factors to consider," says Robert Presser, Vice President of Acme Engineering, a Canada-based manufacturer of commercial and industrial electric boilers with over 60 years of experience.

In Presser's view, the key issues to evaluate include power availability and access, fitting the boiler(s) in the building, reducing

the total cost of installation, and maximizing system reliability and longevity. Consulting with a professional with deep expertise in electric boiler technology, infrastructure and conversion will streamline the process, and facilitate optimal results.

Power Availability and Access

"In any conversion to electric boilers, the first step for property managers or boards of directors is to call their power company and ask, 'Are you able to give us the power we need?' You will need access to hundreds, if not thousands, of amps. Without it, the project cannot proceed," says Presser, adding that most buildings only have access to 480V, three-phase electrical power.

Building managers also need to consider the added cost for the utility to upgrade their power to the building. Additional electrical infrastructure enhancements may be required as well, such as wiring and upgraded circuit breakers.

Reducing the Cost of Conversion and Installation

In the conversion, physically moving and manipulating a large electric boiler through doors and narrow corridors during installation can be extremely difficult — even impossible — particularly in older, space-constrained buildings.

"Getting the boiler through doors into the building can be a challenge when a typical doorway in an older building is only 30 inches wide or less," Presser says. "You'll need to manipulate the boiler into the building and probably fit it into a small elevator to move it to the basement or a service room."

Another problem is the difficulty of removing the existing boiler,

which usually is quite large. Because of this, it is common to leave the existing boiler in place, which places further space constraints on the size of the new electric boiler system to be installed.

"If the building is older, you may have a very large, cast iron, gas- or oil-fired unit that is cost-prohibitive to break down and remove," Presser says.

He adds, "Many property managers also decline to install a larger boiler because they do not want to break a wall or dig a hole and lower the unit to the basement," Presser says. "Try getting a permit for that."

Presser advises an easier, more cost-effective solution. "Instead of trying to get one big boiler into the building, it is often much easier to move in several smaller boilers and then install and interconnect them where there is space available," he says.

In this regard, property managers are finding a more effective solution in high-capacity electric boilers that are specifically designed to fit through doors and other space-constrained areas. As an example, Acme's Slim Series units are designed to produce ample hot water while easing conversion and installation with an ability to "squeeze through" narrow passageways and fit into smaller spaces without costly demolition.

The Slim Series electric boiler technology draws on the company's 40 years of experience in electric heating, temperature control, and manufacture of large integrated units to maximize hot water output in a compact form. Boilers with one pressure vessel tube can deliver 45-180 kW and those with two pressure vessel tubes can provide 225-360 kW.

"With 24" widths, the systems are specifically built narrowly so they can pass through existing 26" doors or corridors and require minimal floor space," Presser says. "The compact units can fit into service elevators for easy access to the building's basement."

He notes that the systems' piping and panels are configured to integrate with existing equipment rooms, to reduce installation costs. In addition, advanced controls are designed to extract the maximum energy from the available electric power.

Optimizing Reliability and Lifespan

Since building tenants rely on the electric boilers for hot water daily, investing a little more in the initial purchase can pay off dramatically in increased long-term reliability and longevity.

While there are some smaller, commercial boilers in the market that will typically last from 5 to 10 years before replacement is required, Acme's electric boilers are designed to an industrial standard that will last decades. In fact, some of the company's electric boilers were used continuously for over 35 years before refurbishment was needed.



Before selecting an electric boiler, it is essential for building managers to factor in longevity, reliability, required maintenance, and installation options. In this vein, for managers who use a hot water loop with their electric boiler, Presser recommends adding a heat exchanger to reduce exposure to pipe scale and to significantly extend longevity.

In this arrangement, the electric boiler would run in a closed loop system. The boiler water is treated before entering one side of the heat exchanger, and hot water for the building exits the exchanger's other side.

"Since the pipe scale and lime never touch the boiler, its elements will remain pristine," Presser says. "You essentially eliminate the issue of scale and lime accumulating in the bottom of the boiler. This extends the unit's lifespan and minimizes maintenance. It is much easier to clean out a plate and heat exchanger than to dismantle a boiler and replace a heating element."

Presser advises another strategy that can substantially improve long-term system reliability, which a typical contractor choosing the minimum boiler spec would not consider.

"If you have a hot water loop in the building, you can increase reliability and decrease downtime by having an extra circulation pump on a skid ready to use in the event the first pump fails." he says.

As commercial building managers increasingly convert from fossil fuel burning to eco-friendly electric boilers to combat climate change and promote health, consulting with an expert can simplify the process, reduce total cost, and increase reliability and longevity.

For more info, contact Robert Presser at Acme Engineering via email at rpresser@acmeprod.com, call (888) 880-5323 or (514) 342-5656, or visit the website at www.acmeprod.com/acme-slim



Whether at substations or in the field, electric utility transmission and distribution identification products such as safety signs, tags and markers are critical to safe, efficient operation, maintenance and repair. These brief warnings or instructions, comprised of letters, numbers, and symbols, must effectively convey key information to personnel. This is crucial not only to identify the location and type of equipment but also to protect utilities from the risk of personnel injury and litigation.

Unfortunately, traditional painted and laminated identification products frequently fade or delaminate when continually exposed to outdoor weather or punishing conditions. Solar UV, rain, snow, ice and windblown debris as well as humidity and seasonal temperature fluctuations inevitably degrade these identification products in a matter of years.

Over time, outdoor exposure can cause painted and laminated numbers and symbols to peel or fade. Even supposedly durable products designed for this purpose can become unreadable over 10 years or more. Consequently, when safety warnings, asset location or identifiers are needed most, technicians may make mistakes or waste time.

Given what is at stake, utilities are now increasingly shifting away from identification products that are marketed as long-lasting and durable but that have the potential to fade or peel, to those designed to withstand decades of abuse without becoming unreadable.

The Importance of Safety Signage

In the electrical utility industry, identification products are utilized just about everywhere.

In substations, signs often warn of arc flash and shock hazard, which OSHA states can result in "serious injury and even death." Markers and tags typically specify when Lock Out Tag Out (LOTO) is necessary before the set-up, maintenance, service, or repair of energized equipment. Substation structure numbers are also necessary for rapid identification and servicing.

On large, high-voltage transmission towers crossing and

direction signs signal trouble areas. Phase tags are also commonly used to indicate phase polarity on the towers, which is important because connecting the wrong phases can lead to dangerous explosions, serious injury, and extended downtime. Transmission towers also utilize aerial observation pole tags for rapid identification and better visibility to aircraft.

Smaller, lower-voltage distribution lines deliver power to homes and businesses on smaller poles. Pole identification products, such as tags and markers, are used to track and identify assets, data, and other vital information. Pole tags can also be used to identify the pole's owner, maintenance history, and other valuable data.

Transformers, whether in the substation or on poles also indicate phase with tags. Similarly, markers and signage are used to indicate LOTO situations.

Not Good Enough

Too many in the industry believe that their current identification products are "good enough" even as legibility becomes compromised over the years. However, the paint will fade and the laminate will peel on these products usually within five to ten years, requiring replacement.

Yet inspecting and replacing illegible products seldom — if ever — occurs on a comprehensive and timely basis because it can be a time consuming, laborious process that is shortchanged in deference to higher priorities. Neglecting to do so, however, can lead to dangerous safety lapses as well as inefficient operation.

Designed for Lasting Safety

So, how can safety signage be designed and constructed to ensure readability after decades? The answer requires a shift in thinking. For applications with the longest lasting

requirements, impermanent paints and laminates should be avoided in favor of much more durable solutions. The signage should also be constructed using robust substrate or embossed characters that can take a beating from Mother Nature.

As an example, one type of sturdy signage system developed for the industry, called EVERLAST by Tech Products, Inc., a leader in the manufacture of industrial identification products for 75 years, is made of thick, high impact polyolefin plastic with copy and pictograms that are permanently embedded through the entire thickness of the substrate.

Tech Products, Inc., which serves electric and gas utilities, telecom and cable companies, oil and gas pipelines, and OEMs, offers five legacy brands and approximately 10,000 diverse products for these industries.

The polyolefin plastic is impervious to sun, wind, rain, humidity, salt water, and temperature variations as well as fumes and acid or alkali solutions. The characters can be seen from a distance and have sharp contrast. The signage can be cut, scratched, even shot through with little or no effect to the embedded characters, which helps to ensure readability decades later.

Third-party certification validates the durability of this approach. UL performed numerous durability tests on the signs in compliance with UL and ASTM standards. When the signs were subjected to the equivalent of 43 years of UV exposure, salt spray, vibration, abrasion, and temperature variation, the test results showed no change in color or legibility.

Another effective method of creating permanent signage is to utilize embossing. Embossing creates raised characters in metal materials to improve legibility even when covered in dust, dirt, or even paint. When lasting transmission and distribution markers are required, for example, deep embossed pole badge, pole inspection, and pole markers can be constructed of unpainted, embossed aluminum, brass, or stainless steel. The highly defined characters remain legible for the life of the pole.

Alternatively, on metal reflective pole tags, black characters can be screen printed on construction-grade yellow or sliver reflective sheeting so that it is durable, and UV stabilized. These tags can be used anywhere in areas that need to be seen with a flashlight.

For tight, confined spaces where close up reading is required, miniature markers with raised, 3D characters, called FastTags by Tech Products, Inc., can also be designed to remain legible even in low light, oily, or dusty environments. The raised, 3D characters are hot stamped with high quality UV stable foil and are nonconductive and non-corroding, which is ideal for environments exposed to water such as utilities, offshore rigs, and sewer systems.

No Replacing Physical Signage

Another reason these identification products need to last decades is they are sure to remain as valuable tools for utilities even as new technologies for asset management and maintenance are employed throughout the industry. Even with state-of-the-art technology like geographic information systems (GIS) and global positioning systems (GPS), electrical utilities will continue to require traditional physical identification products such as pole markers, for example.

Although pole tags are not mandated by regulations, many utilities choose to use them to assist with recovery efforts after a regional outage by still posting serialized GIS or GPS pole marking and numbering correspond to a pole's geographic location using GIS/GPS coordinates. During emergencies like hurricanes, mutual aid situations often arise where utility trucks from different regions are called on for assistance. These trucks may not have access to GIS or GPS location information, making pole tags essential for proper identification and location guidance.

Although electric utilities have long utilized identification products in the field or in substations, the potential that critical information could become obscured or unreadable in a matter of years is no longer acceptable as a standard. Even when not strictly mandated, utilities that opt to use innovative products designed to last for many decades can significantly improve safety and uptime, while reducing potential liability and litigation risk.

For more information, call 1-800-221-1311, email info@techproducts.com, or visit www.techproducts.com.



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The U.S. Department of Labor recently announced a notice of proposed rulemaking to revise regulations regarding who can be authorized by employees to act as their representative to accompany the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliance officers during physical workplace inspections.

Specifically, the proposed rule clarifies that employees may authorize an employee, or they may authorize a non-employee third party if the compliance officer determines the third party is reasonably necessary to conduct an effective and thorough inspection.

The proposed changes also clarify that third-party representatives are not limited to industrial hygienists or safety engineers, two examples included in the existing regulation. Third-party representatives may be reasonably necessary because they have skills, knowledge or experience that may help inform the compliance officer's inspection. This information may include experience with particular hazards, workplace conditions or language skills that can improve communications between OSHA representatives and workers.

"Congress considered worker participation a key element of workplace safety and health inspections when it passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act," explained Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Doug Parker. "This proposal aims to make inspections more effective and ultimately make workplaces safer by increasing opportunities for employees to be represented in the inspection process."

In addition to the NPRM's proposed revisions, OSHA is also seeking public comment on the criteria and degree of deference OSHA should give to employees' choice of representative in determining whether a third party can participate in an inspection.

The Occupational Safety and Health Act gives the employer and employees the right to have a representative authorized by them accompany OSHA officials during a workplace inspection to aid the investigation. Employee participation and representation is critical to an inspector's ability to complete a thorough and effective workplace investigation and helps OSHA gather information about the job site's conditions and hazards.

The proposed revisions do not change existing regulations that give OSHA compliance officers the authority to determine if an individual is authorized by employees and to prevent someone from participating in the walkaround inspection if their conduct interferes with a fair and orderly inspection, or to limit participation to protect employer trade secrets.

Submit comments at Regulations.gov, the federal eRulemaking portal by Oct. 30, 2023. Include Docket Number OSHA-2023-0008 on all submissions. For more information, read the Federal Register notice at tinyurl.com/ycknrfds.

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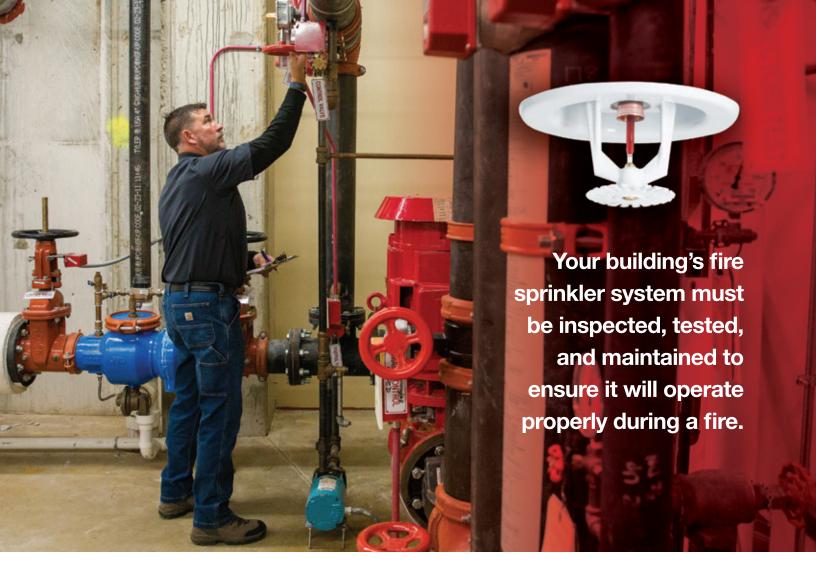
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And in accordance with state law (225 ILCS 317/17), building owners must utilize an inspector who is employed by a state-licensed fire sprinkler contractor and has appropriate credentials through completion of a certified sprinkler fitter apprenticeship program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor and/or certification through NICET III, ASSE 15010, or NFPA Water-Based ITM (WBITM).

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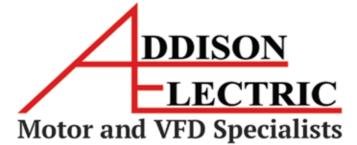
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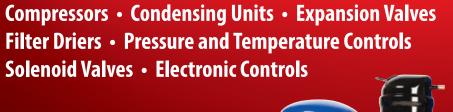


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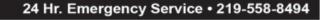
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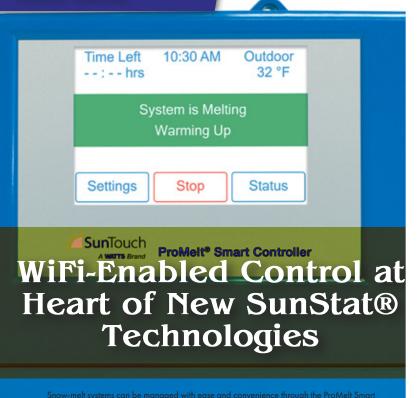
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As the Internet of Things expands into our world, so does the need for flexibility and control of the technology that we use to govern our lives. To that end, SunTouch continues to offer system controls that connect to Wi-Fi, enabling management from anywhere.

Most recently added to its Smart & Connected line of thermostats, the SunStat CommandPlus thermostat allows users remotely access and control their floor-warming systems via the Watts home app.

The SunStat CommandPlus thermostat's Wi-Fi connection enables features such as automatic clock setting, and warmweather compensation and shut down. With a glass front and touch screen, the thermostat's look and feel mirrors the technology we're most accustomed to using every day, and its remote accessibility via the Watts Home mobile app allows for a fully programmable 7-day schedule.

Flexibility extends to SunTouch's outdoor technologies with its ProMelt® Smart Panel, designed to manage any size snow-melting system. The ProMelt Smart Panel currently is available in 100 AMP or 200 AMP capacity, for ideal operation of 120-, 208-, 240-, or 277-VAC snow-melting systems. And, like the SunStat CommandPlus, the ProMelt Smart Panel is Wi-Fi enabled for control of your snow-melting system from wherever you happen to be through the Watts Home app. And its all-in-one design makes for quick-and-easy install.

For more information, visit SunTouch.com/thermostats or SunTouch.com/ProMelt.



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ACROSS

- 1 Captain (abbr.)
- 5 Drink slowly
- 8 California (abbr.)
- 11 Association (abbr.)
- 15 Decoys
- 17 Organization concerned with civil liberties (abbr.)
- 19 Sego lily's bulb
- 20 Authored
- 21 Adios
- 22 Lock partners
- 23 Brews
- 24 Reference
- 25 Darken
- 26 Espy
- 28 Fetid
- 30 __ Lanka
- 32 Possessive
- pronoun 33 Curses
- 35 Vacation day
- 38 Side note
- 40 Fluid
- 42 Italian money
- 43 Short-term memory
- 44 Baby powder
- 49 __ and span
- 47 Rage

- 51 Clean 55 Lager
- 56 Cycles per second
- 58 Range
- 62 Legume
- 63 Foolish, clumsy
- person
- 66 Unite in alliance
- 67 Compass point
- 68 Cow
- 69 Shade
- 71 Mexican sandwich
- 73 Not any
- 75 Measuring devices
- 77 Solidified

- 94 River (Spanish)
- 95 Goddess
- 96 Gentlewoman
- 98 Some

- 60 Vapor

- 65 Genetic code

- 79 Economics abrv.
- 81 Fastener
- 83 Dined
- 84 Clothes pressers
- 87 Not amateur
- 88 Scotsman
- 90 That man
- 92 Related by family

- **99** Tire
- 100 Speak loudly

- **102** Jab
- 105 Forms
- 107 Tropical bird

- 117 Rebutted
- 119 Birthmark
- 122 Fortify
- 123 Congressional vote
- 125 Prying 126 Those who make

- 129 State capital
- 131 Extinct bird
- 133 Mr. Donahue
- 139 To incite
- **141** Boss
- 145 Underdone
- 142 For fear that 143 Free of

- 108 Pounds per square
- inch
- 110 Babble
- 112 Inactive quiescent
- 115 Mr. O'Brien

- the food laws
- (abbr.)
- 127 Bad (prefix)
- 136 Kind of kitty
- 138 Infix
- 140 European monetary unit
- 144 Kitten's crv

- DOWN
 - 1 Clothed
 - 2 Sound

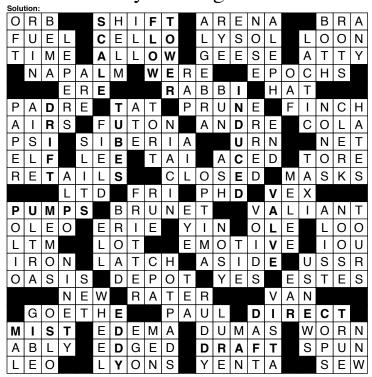
 - 3 First
- 4 Ball holder
- 5 Reason
- 6 Sorbet
- 7 Layer
- 8 Basements 9 Ripen
- 10 Defeat
- 11 Artist's creation
- 12 Congealed
- 13 Country
- 14 Loch monster 16 Japanese dish
- 18 Defunct football league 19 Saudi Arabian
- citizen
- 20 Middle 27 Lawyer's title
- 29 Petroleum retailer 31 Brat
- 34 What a nurse gives
- 35 Belted 36 Smell
- 37 Talk incessantly 41 Union of Soviet

- Socialist Republics
- 44 Check
- 45 Short for aluminum
- 46 Comedian Jav
- 48 Traveled by horse
- 50 Ice house
- 52 Drug doer
- 53 Good outlook
- 54 Look 56 Wash 57 South American
- nation
- Tangle 61 Combined effort of
- two
- 64 girl 66 Land unit
- 69 Get hot
- 70 Ship initials 72 Furthest back
- 74 Soon 76 What Casper is
- 78 Paradise 79 Canal
- 80 Rad! 82 Doctoral degree
- 83 Bullets 85 Space ship builders
- 86 Wait 87 Be nosey
- 89 Trigonometric

- function
- 91 Verse meter 92 Hurled
- 93 Government agency
- 97 Women's magazine
- 101 Licensed practical nurse
- 103 Reduced (abbr.)
- 104 Mixed
- 106 Papa 107 I want my _
- 109 Speaker 111 In progress
- 113 Last
- 114 Under, poetically
- 115 Old woman 116 Leaves out
- **118** Kind
- 120 Shade
- 121 Blade 122 Cain killed him 124 Jewish calendar
 - month
- 126 Course **128** Harp
- 130 Put
- 132 Kimono sash **134** Sina
- 135 Anger
- 137 Atmosphere

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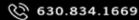
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