

ILLINOIS MASTER PLUMBER

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PLUMBING • HEATING • COOLING • CONTRACTORS

Volume 111, No. 1

January, 2025

■ Over 160 Booths!! ■ See New Products ■ Talk to Manufacturers ■ Learn New Technologies ■

Illinois PHCC 2025 EXPO

Trade Show & Continuing Education



Friday, March 21, 2025
12:00-5:00 P.M.

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The Illinois Master Plumber published monthly, is the official publication of the Illinois Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors Association, only insofar as notices, bulletins, and reports are concerned.

Editorial and personalized news stories reflect the opinions of the writers, and not necessarily that of the Association. Neither the Association nor this magazine accepts responsibility for statements or claims made by advertisers for their products or services.

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PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

by Terry McCarthy
Illinois PHCC President

All In: IL PHCC Annual Expo is All About Education and Collaboration

Sharpening our skills; learning the latest techniques; expanding our familiarity of products; and enhancing our safety practices. It's what we do! The plumbing and HVAC occupations are never complacent. On the contrary – and especially in Illinois – we're always planning on how we can learn more. As the CEU class schedule on page 6 demonstrates year after year, our state chapter is always moving full speed ahead when it comes to knowledge, ability and efficiency.

The 2025 Illinois PHCC Expo will be ready to welcome you on Friday, March 21 at Drury Lane in Oakbrook Terrace. Once again it will be a full day packed with information that also brings together all the “branches” of this industry that provides us the livelihoods we're proud of.

The value of Expo to the professionals who comprise our trade is second to none. The only cost that an attendee will incur throughout the entire event is the very reasonable \$35.00 fee for the 4-hour, state-approved CE class. That's it! Starting with free and ample parking, complimentary coffee and donuts await. The volunteers (for whom we are immeasurably thankful) will check-in the class participants, who will be seated in Drury Lane's state of the art and unconventionally comfortable world-renowned theater for the program. All “students” will receive certificates via email following the class, and the state chapter staff will submit the list of all who've completed their 4 hours of required ongoing education credits to the state plumbing program.

The abundant and well-organized trade show starting just before the CE class is dismissed will feature over 160 booths exhibiting everything from plumbing fixtures and appurtenances to work trucks, tools, technology, software and much more. The American Society of Plumbing Engineers (ASPE) Chicago Chapter will again be co-locating with the IL PHCC trade show, which will further enhance the already impressive and varied show. The post-Expo reception concludes the event with a free buffet dinner, coffee, soft drinks (with optional cocktails for purchase), and an ice cream dessert along with exciting raffle prizes – all at no additional cost whatsoever.

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The Expo gives you the opportunity to come together with plumbing and HVAC contractors, licensed plumbers and HVAC/piping technicians, distributors, sales pros, manufacturers, UA union representatives, inspectors, association leaders, government officials, training instructors, retirees, apprentices, friends, spouses...and on and on. It's an event you don't want to miss.

I'll end with a special request to all readers of this article: **Spread the word about all the upcoming Illinois PHCC Chapter CE classes and encourage everyone you run across in our trade to attend the Expo on March 21 at Drury Lane!** The more industry pros who attend, the better the outcome and the more incentive we have to continue improving the Expo each year. Nothing will please us more than to welcome as many of our colleagues, friends and peers to experience this unique and amazing showcase of talent, technology, education, information, innovation, comradery and fun. I hope to see you there!

-Terry



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JANUARY 17, 2025

IL PHCC Online CEU Class

FEBRUARY 19-21, 2025

CCA of PHCC Winter Meeting
San Antonio, TX

FEBRUARY 22, 2025

IL PHCC Online CEU Class

MARCH 21, 2025

IL PHCC Expo & Educational Day
Drury Lane Conference Center
Oakbrook Terrace, IL

MARCH 22, 2025

IL PHCC & Auxiliary Board Meetings
Hilton Suites
Oakbrook Terrace, IL

MARCH 24-26, 2025

QSC of PHCC Conference
New Orleans, LA

APRIL 25, 2025

IL PHCC Online CEU Class

JUNE, 2025 DATE & TIME TBD

IL PHCC Annual & Board Meetings

OCTOBER 27-30, 2025

PHCC CONNECT 25
Grand Rapids, Michigan

*Happy
New
Year*



2024/25 ILLINOIS PHCC CEU SCHEDULE

The Illinois PHCC schedule for online and in-person classes for the 2025 renewal year is listed below. These classes offer a minimum of 3 different speakers and topics in each class.

All Illinois PHCC classes will provide State hours for Certified Inspectors and Licensed Plumbers.

Please visit our website at www.ilphcc.com for the latest information and to register for a class. Registration links will be live at least 6 weeks prior to the class date.

2024-2025 Continuing Education Dates

Friday, January 17, 2025

12:00 pm – 4:00 pm (Online)

Saturday, February 22, 2025

8:00 am – 12:00 pm (Online)

Friday, March 21, 2025

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

**Drury Lane Conference Center
Oakbrook Terrace, IL (In person)**

Friday, April 25, 2025

12:00 pm – 4:00 pm (Online)



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IRS ISSUES STANDARD MILEAGE RATES FOR 2025

The Internal Revenue Service has announced that the optional standard mileage rate for automobiles driven for business will increase by 3 cents in 2025, while the mileage rates for vehicles used for other purposes will remain unchanged from 2024.

Optional standard mileage rates are used to calculate the deductible costs of operating vehicles for business, charitable and medical purposes, as well as for active-duty members of the Armed Forces who are moving.

Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car, van, pickup or panel truck will be:

- 70 cents per mile driven for business use, up 3 cents from 2024.
- 21 cents per mile driven for medical purposes, the same as in 2024.
- 21 cents per mile driven for moving purposes for qualified active-duty members of the Armed Forces, unchanged from last year.
- 14 cents per mile driven in service of charitable organizations, equal to the rate in 2024.

CONT. ON PAGE 8

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The rates apply to fully-electric and hybrid automobiles, as well as gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles.

While the mileage rate for charitable use is set by statute, the mileage rate for business use is based on an annual study of the fixed and variable costs of operating an automobile. The rate for medical and moving purposes, meanwhile, is based on only the variable costs from the annual study.

Under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, taxpayers cannot claim a miscellaneous itemized deduction for unreimbursed employee travel expenses. And only taxpayers who are members of the military on active duty may claim a deduction for moving expenses incurred while relocating under orders to a permanent change of station. Use of the standard mileage rates is optional. Taxpayers may instead choose to calculate the actual costs of using their vehicle.

Taxpayers using the standard mileage rate for a vehicle they own and use for business must choose to use the rate in the first year the automobile is available for business use. Then, in later years, they can choose to use the standard mileage rate or actual expenses.

For a leased vehicle, taxpayers using the standard mileage rate must employ that method for the entire lease period, including renewals.

Notice 2025-5 at www.irs.gov contains the optional 2025 standard mileage rates, as well as the maximum automobile cost used to calculate mileage reimbursement allowances under a fixed-and variable rate (FAVR) plan. The notice also provides the maximum fair market value of employer-provided automobiles first made available to employees for personal use in 2025 for which employers may calculate mileage allowances using a cents-per-mile valuation rule or the fleet-average-valuation rule.

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Illinois PHCC Expo & Educational Day

*Friday, March 21, 2025
Drury Lane Conference Center
100 Drury Lane
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181*

*9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. – Continuing Education Class
Noon – 5 P.M. EXPO Trade Show*

Friday, March 21st, will provide you with a great opportunity to view new products, talk to manufacturers, learn new technologies, network with other plumbers and contractors, and also have some fun. If you have not yet gotten your required **4 hours of continuing education credit for your 2025 license renewal**, now is the time. Multiple speakers will be presenting on a variety of industry topics. All of the day's activities are free of charge, with the exception of a \$35.00 fee for the 4 hour CEU class. **You must bring your most recent plumbing license with you to the class. Pre-registration is required for the CEU class.**

The **highlight of the day** will be the annual **Illinois PHCC trade show from 12:00-5:00 P.M.** Come see over 160 booths of the **latest products, tools, trucks and technologies.** Admittance to the **2025 Expo is free of charge.** After a busy day of education and visiting the Expo, relax and unwind at the **Illinois PHCC sponsored "After Expo" Reception.**

A block of **rooms** has been reserved at the Hilton Suites at a **special Expo rate** of \$139.00 single/double occupancy plus tax. Remember that all rooms are 2 room suites that include a full breakfast buffet: upon check-in please inform the front desk of how many people are staying in your room. Hotel reservations can be made by calling the **Hilton Suites at 1-630-941-0100.** Be sure to mention the Illinois PHCC to get the special rate.

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Questions ??? Call (217)522-7219

ILLINOIS PLUMBERS & PIPEFITTERS ASSOCIATION
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*Illinois PHCC Educational Day
March 21, 2025
9:00 AM to 1:00 PM – CEU Class
Drury Lane Conference Center
100 Drury Lane
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181*

Registration for the CE class will be online at www.ilphcc.com. Click on the date of the class to register. The fee for the March 21, 2025 class is \$35.00

Each registrant will need to use their own profile (email address). If you do not have a profile you will need to create one. If you have issues logging in or are unable to register online, contact Shelly at shelly@ilphcc.com

Once the payment is processed you will receive an email confirmation. Registrations will not be processed unless accompanied by the fee.

You **MUST** bring your most recent Plumbers License with you to the class. Please arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the start time to complete registration.

**All registrations MUST be received before March 4, 2025.
NO WALK-INS will be accepted for the CEU class.**

Also counts as State hours for Certified Plumbing Inspectors.

Cancellations will be charged a cancellation fee of \$15.00.

Questions ??? contact Shelly at shelly@ilphcc.com

Remember the Expo runs from 12:00 to 5:00 P.M. and is **FREE!**

www.ilphcc.com



Questions ??? Call (217)522-7219



PHCC NATIONAL IS PREPARED FOR CHANGES IN POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

By Mark Valentini, Vice President of Legislative Affairs

With the dust finally settled on the 2024 presidential elections, PHCC's team in Washington has a legislative strategy in place and ready to execute going into the 119th Congress next year. We expect many new opportunities, as well as a few challenges, for our policy priorities:

Energy Policy

PHCC has made clear prior to November 5 that a Republican administration and Congress would bode well for our positions on energy policy, particularly as it relates to the use of natural gas and gas appliances in the built environment. We expect Congress to introduce energy legislation, and PHCC will work with the House and Senate to ensure our priorities are enshrined in any legislation that promotes a robust and diverse national energy portfolio and allows consumer choice when it comes to powering their homes and essential appliances for health and welfare.

Tax Policy

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 included a number of provisions that contractors reported were beneficial to their bottom line. This included a reduction of the corporate tax rate to 21%, increased estate tax thresholds that allows a less burdensome transition of business assets to the next generation, and a pass-through deduction of qualified business income under Section 199A of the tax code. The latter two provisions are set to expire at the end of 2025, and PHCC will urge Congress to extend or make permanent those provisions so that contractors have more to invest in their businesses and workforce.


Workforce Policy

PHCC's position on workforce education and training has always focused on equipping jobseekers in the building trades with a holistic skillset that has been effectively provided through registered apprenticeship programs for more than 80 years. Conservative lawmakers have taken a more credentials-issued approach that may work well in other industries, but if applied to our industry, risks putting jobseekers on the market who lack essential skills needed by plumbing and HVAC contractors. PHCC will work with Congress and the Department of Labor to ensure the integrity of registered apprenticeship programs so that they continue to produce high-quality workers for our industry who will have secure jobs for life, jobs that require human hands that can't be replaced with automation, and a clear pathway to the middle class and a high quality of life.

Contractors Must Be Heard


An essential PHCC member benefit is our annual Legislative Conference. Every year, dozens of PHCC contractors travel to Washington, D.C., to lobby their legislators on these critical issues. While PHCC leverages its full-time staff to maintain these critical relationships on Capitol Hill, a contractor's presence validates and reinforces our message. Please be sure to mark May 20-21, 2025, on your calendars to come to D.C. for our annual Legislative Conference. Registration will open early in 2025, so stay tuned!





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Questions? Contact the Illinois PHCC at bev@ilphcc.com or shelly@ilphcc.com

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Embracing Risk Management Leadership in the New Year

In today's business environment, effective risk management can help take your team to the next level of success and safety. Consider the following to lead by example and empower your team:

Leadership Responsibilities

Risk management leadership starts at the top. As a leader, you can begin by hosting regular training sessions on safety subjects that apply to your industry. Effective leadership can involve investing time and resources in:

- Developing sound policies and procedures
- Setting clear expectations
- Rewarding positive behaviors
- Maintaining open channels for communication
- Staying informed about [current safety regulations](#) and industry best practices

In addition, providing training, education, tools, and incentives can encourage employees to take ownership of risk management practices.

Lead from the Top Down

Setting the tone from the top is critical for fostering a [risk-aware culture](#). Executives should model behavior they wish to see, such as adherence to policies, participation in training, open communication, and prioritizing safety.

Proactive Planning

It can help to adopt a proactive approach to risk management by anticipating potential hazards and implementing preventative measures. This can involve:

- Conducting regular risk assessments
- Reviewing and updating safety policies on an annual basis
- Providing necessary tools, equipment, and [personal protective equipment](#) (PPE)
- Encouraging breaks

Everyone is a Risk Manager

Every employee, from executives to new hires, plays a pivotal role at your business. Encourage all team members to consider themselves [risk managers](#) to help keep your business safe.

This article is for general information and risk prevention only and should not be considered legal or other expert advice. The recommendations herein may help reduce, but are not guaranteed to eliminate, any or all risk of loss. The information herein may be subject to, and is not a substitute for, any laws or regulations that may apply. Some of the services referenced herein may be provided by third parties wholly independent of Federated. Federated provides access to these services with the understanding that neither Federated nor its employees provide legal or other expert advice. All products and services not available in all states. Qualified counsel should be sought with questions specific to your circumstances and applicable laws.



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HOW TO CREATE A THRIVING (AND INTENTIONAL) MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM FOR YOUR BUSINESS



By Staff Writer, PHCC-National Association

Supporting your employees' mental health isn't just a compassionate choice – it's essential for business success. Consider this: alcohol misuse alone costs the U.S. economy \$249 billion annually, and 62% of adults with a substance use disorder are actively employed. Here's a hopeful statistic: employees in recovery miss 14 fewer workdays per year than those struggling with untreated substance use.

At PHCC CONNECT 2024, Bill Heffernan of **ScreenSafe** led an insightful session on building a successful mental health program, and it's now available for you to watch! This session is packed with actionable strategies, from creating a supportive workplace culture to understanding your role in helping employees. Bill shares how aligning with Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and crafting a culture that suits your unique needs – rather than copying others – can make all the difference.

PHCC is proud to offer this valuable resource, compliments of PHCC's Union-Affiliated Contractors, which will help you better understand the impact of mental health challenges in the workplace and how you can reduce the stigma that prevents employees from seeking the help they need. Watch the *full* video at <https://replay.dropbox.com/share> to learn how to build a mental health program that supports your team.



Bill (pictured, center, in this photo from CONNECT) is the founder and co-president of ScreenSafe, a company that administers drug testing services for various organizations and companies, primarily focusing on the unionized construction trades. He conducts seminars and has served as a keynote presenter to labor organizations and signatory contractors' associations on such relevant topics as Reasonable Suspicion, Mental Health & Suicide Prevention, and more. Also pictured, from left, are PHCC's Union-Affiliated Contractors (UAC) Chair Dave Frame and UAC Vice Chair Steve Stimson.



HR Question OF THE MONTH

The HR Question of the Month is provided by Zywave®, a company wholly independent from Federated Insurance. Federated provides its clients access to this information through the Federated Employment Practices Network with the understanding that neither Federated nor its employees provide legal or employment advice. As such, Federated does not warrant the accuracy, adequacy, or completeness of the information herein. This information may be subject to restrictions and regulation in your state. Consult with your own qualified legal counsel regarding your specific facts and circumstances.

Question

We currently divide employee days off into two banks: a vacation bank and a sick bank. We have a number of employees complaining that they do not have enough vacation days left at the end of the year to take time off around the holidays. They are asking if they can use their sick days to take time off (even though they're not actually sick). We want to support our employees and are thinking about changing our employee time off to one big paid-time-off (PTO) bank that employees can use for any reason instead of two separate banks. What are the advantages of creating one big PTO bank?

ANSWER

There are several benefits of using a PTO plan versus traditional vacation and sick allotments. The company may appear more attractive to potential and current employees because they are allotted more days to takeoff. Since employees may not use all their sick days, they may view the lump-sum days as more vacation time. These plans also allow employees to feel that they are treated as adults and can make their own

decisions about vacation and personal time without having to explain to their employers. In addition, the administration of these plans is generally not as complex and does not require as much guidance.

If a company is considering implementing a PTO plan, it should make sure this benefit option fits with its environment and culture. It is also best to establish clear directives for employees, such as procedures for requesting time off, before implementing the plan. Employers should work with local counsel to ensure their policies comply with all applicable laws, such as state paid sick leave laws.





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