

# ILLINOIS MASTER PLUMBER

ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF PLUMBING-HEATING-COOLING-CONTRACTORS

Volume 101, No. 11

November 2015

## What's **WRONG**



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# PRESIDENT'S THOUGHTS

by Erik Graybeal  
Illinois PHCC President

## **Hello to everyone out there.**

I will start out with my condolences to the Cub fans. As you say at the end of every season, "Wait till next year." I thought it was great to have both the Cubs and the Cardinals play each other in the playoffs this year. I was able to attend the first playoff game in St Louis and had a great time. The playoff atmosphere was awesome.

I want to also take a moment to ask for continued prayers and support for former State President Steve Jany and his wife Donna who are both facing medical difficulties. Steve and Donna have both supported and have played a huge role in the Illinois PHCC and Auxiliary for 20+ years. A Go Fund Me Page has been set up with their story and updates. Please visit <https://www.gofundme.com/yc4874> to find out more and learn how you can help.

As you are aware, we still do not have a state budget. If you have a CDB project, you probably are still owed money from your June pay request. There is good news however as the CDB has implemented the vendor payment program. The contractor or vendor has to register and input the past due invoices. The state will then pay the vendor 90% of the application after retainage. The vendor however, has to relinquish any interest that would be owed to them. The other 10% would be paid after the budget is approved. You can find out more information about this at <https://www.illinois.gov/cms/business/VendorPayment/Pages/default.aspx>.

I attended the Connect 2015 National Convention

September 29 through October 2. I thought the hotel and conference center were great. All of the educational sessions were very well done. I would like to congratulate the B-N Association for winning the Chapter Excellence Award for small local chapters. Bev Potts and Chuck Hicks work tirelessly for the B-N Association and on behalf of the B-N contractors I would like to say thank you for all their hard work.

The Illinois PHCC also won the Distinguished Chapter Award. A special thank you also goes out to Bev Potts and Shelly Lott for all their hard work. It was an honor for me and Bev to receive these awards on behalf of the B-N and Illinois PHCC.

At the convention, there were two keynote speakers. Doc Hendley spoke about his organization "Wine to Water". He was very inspirational and emotional about his mission to provide the poorest of countries with drinking water through drilling wells and providing filtered water from local sustainable materials. He has written a book about his life and was selected as one of CNN's Hero of the Year in 2009.

Another speaker, Carey Lohrenz spoke during the annual meeting. She was the US Navy's first woman F-14 Tomcat Fighter Pilot. Her speech about how she never gave up on her dream and overcame obstacles to become a woman flying fighter jets was interesting. She also talked about her experiences aboard one of the most challenging environments, an aircraft carrier and how it takes a team all working together to make

the ship operate and how this relates to our everyday businesses. Your business must evolve and adapt to changing markets and customer needs to be successful.

We are approaching the holidays soon. Make sure to take time to enjoy it with your family. Be safe if you are traveling and have a Happy Thanksgiving.

**Until next month...**

**Erik Graybeal**



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# In MEMORY

**Frances M. Stasukinas**, 79, of Springfield, passed away peacefully on Sunday, Sept. 27, 2015, at St. John's Hospice, surrounded by her loving family.

She was the President and Co-founder of Springfield Mechanical Corporation with her husband, Jerry, and served as the bookkeeper and office manager for over 50 years. She was Jerry's lifelong partner in life, family, and business.

Frances was a member of the Illinois Association of Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling Contractors Auxiliary and served as President for two years. She was very active in Auxiliary and PHCC events, and chaired various Auxiliary fundraisers.

Frances was preceded in death by her parents; sons, Jerry Stasukinas Jr. and Andrew Stasukinas; and two brothers, Charles and Norm Hussey. She is survived by her husband, Jerry Stasukinas of Springfield; daughter, Sherrie Stasukinas Smith of Springfield; and three grandchildren.

A funeral mass was held on Thursday, Oct. 1, 2015, at St. Cabrini Catholic Church in Springfield with the Rev. Clint Honkomp, OP, celebrant. Burial was at Calvary Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

The Illinois PHCC and Auxiliary extend our condolences to the Stasukinas family.



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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**NOVEMBER 14, 2015**

Illinois PHCC & Auxiliary Board Meetings  
 Marriott Hotel & Conference Center  
 Normal, IL

**JANUARY 8, 2016**

Illinois PHCC CEU Class  
 Heartland Community College  
 Normal, IL

**FEBRUARY 19, 2016**

Illinois PHCC CEU Class  
 Heartland Community College  
 Normal, IL

**FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 2, 2016**

UAC Unity Conference  
 Marriott Pompano Beach Resort  
 Fort Lauderdale, FL

**MARCH 17, 2016**

Illinois PHCC Annual Meeting  
 Hilton Suites Hotel  
 Oakbrook Terrace, IL

**MARCH 18, 2016**

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

**MARCH 19, 2016**

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



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# PHCC CONTRACTOR FALLS ON HARD TIMES

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Steve Jany owner of Jany Plumbing Service Inc., of Chester, Illinois was hospitalized on June 14, 2015 and underwent surgery in Madison, Wisconsin for a severe bacterial infection in his left leg on June 16, 2015. Steve spent an extended time in the hospital and remained on 24 hour intravenous antibiotic treatment after his release. On July 21st, Steve was released from the doctors in Madison, Wisconsin to the care of an orthopedic surgeon in Illinois. At this time, he has very limited mobility and is still not able to work.

Jany Plumbing Service is a one man shop. With Steve unable to work, he and his wife Donna, who also works in the business, have no source of income. In addition to no income, they are facing the ongoing expenses of their business, home, and mounting medical bills.

With things already looking dire, the situation went from bad to worse. On October 16th, Donna Jany was rushed to the Chester Hospital with extreme abdominal pain, which turned out to be an artery to her lung that had ruptured. She was quickly taken into surgery and

then spent the next week in the ICU. She has now been able to return home to continue her recovery. It will be an extended recovery period due to the nature of the surgery. Had Donna not gotten to the hospital when she did, she most likely would not have survived. The medical bills continue to mount, along with their everyday expenses.

The Illinois Plumbing, Heating, Cooling Contractors Association (PHCC), which the Janys are members of, started a GoFundMe account online as a way for people to make donations to help defray expenses. Steve and Donna have been active volunteers in the PHCC and the Auxiliary for many years. They have also donated their time and talents to help with service projects for military personnel, veterans, senior citizens, at-risk youth, and physically challenged children. We hope that people will help the Janys, like they have helped so many others, as they continue to struggle with health and financial issues. They need all of our support and prayers as they continue this very difficult journey. 🙏

**Steve Jany Recovery Fund -**

**<https://www.gofundme.com/ybc4874>**

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# WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

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I know most of you are looking at this picture and saying “that’s why there are licensed plumbers”. It looks as though it was a 48 can job. 24 cans to figure out what to do, and 24 to put it together.

They were thinking of plumbing code by properly securing the non-tempered tub/shower valve with a copper strap and making it water tight with a piece of shower curtain, (Maybe not).

Generally when using Section 890.150, either as an explanation to an owner or in a court case in front of a judge, it is the opinion of the inspector. In this case we believe any judge would rule that the workmanship was in complete violation.

The picture says What’s Wrong and the following code sections explain why.

Should someone want to contest this installation they can always use section 890.1940 and submit a request to the State.

## Section 890.150 Workmanship

- a) All plumbing work performed shall comply with the provisions of this Part.
- b) In the process of installing or repairing any part of a plumbing system, the floors, walls,



ceilings, tile work, or any other part of the building or premises which must be changed, altered or replaced shall be left in a safe structural condition so as not to pose a health or safety hazard.

## Section 890.610 General Requirements - Material and Design

- a) Quality of Fixtures: Plumbing fixtures shall comply with approved designs, be constructed from approved materials, **have smooth, impervious surfaces and be free of defects and concealed fouling surfaces.** (See Appendix A: Table A “Approved Materials and Standards for Plumbing Fixtures” and “Approved Standards for Plumbing Appliances/Appurtenances/ Devices”.)

## Section 890.630 Installation

- a) Cleaning. Plumbing fixtures shall be installed in a manner to afford easy access for cleaning.

## Section 890.690 Shower Receptors and Compartments



## WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

CONTINUED

- b) Water Temperature Safety. All shower compartments and shower-bath combinations shall be provided with an automatic safety water mixing device to prevent sudden unanticipated changes in water temperature or excessive water temperatures. The automatic safety water mixing device shall comply with ASSE 1016/ASME A112.1016/CSA B125.16
- d) Materials. Shower walls shall be constructed of durable, smooth, non-absorbent, non-corrosive and waterproof materials.

### Section 890.1940 General Administration

The plans and specifications for a plumbing

system whose design does not comply with this Part must be submitted to the Department for approval prior to installation of such a plumbing system. Such approval shall be in writing from the Department and shall be based on a determination that the system is expected to perform and exhibit durability as if meeting the requirements of this Part.

This month's winner was Mike Henderson from Basio Plumbing, Heating & Air in Galesburg and he will receive an Illinois PHCC logo item for his correct entry. Is there something wrong with this month's cover photo? Let us know your thoughts by emailing [bev@ilphcc.com](mailto:bev@ilphcc.com) or faxing 217-522-4315.

We would like to thank those who continue to send us pictures to be featured in the contest. Photos can be submitted by emailing them to [bev@ilphcc.com](mailto:bev@ilphcc.com). 📧

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# CONNECT 2015

## PUTS REAL SOLUTIONS WITHIN REACH

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There was a great deal of activity swirling in the atmosphere in Hollywood, Fla., last month, and fortunately it was all in the form of workforce development solutions, leadership tips, new technologies, and results-oriented strategies geared for PHCC members and their businesses. While Hurricane Joaquin only threatened to interfere with some travel plans home, attendees at PHCC's CONNECT 2015 stayed focused on charting a clear course for success for their businesses and the industry, engaging in valuable educational sessions, Product & Technology Showcase demonstrations, and those always-productive conversations with other contractors.

### **Some highlights of the week included:**

- Two inspiring keynote speeches:
  - ◆ “Digging for Hope: Turning Wine to Water and Other Modern Day Miracles” by Doc Hendley, who spoke about the immense power of meaningful relationships and how they can help both individuals and businesses overcome obstacles, making what sometimes seems impossible into a reality.
  - ◆ “Lessons in Leadership” by the U.S. Navy's first F-14 fighter pilot Carey Lohrenz, who shared the fundamentals of how to be successful, whether that's flying a jet at Mach 2, or creating an efficient and innovative business environment
- A recognition of the many deserving award

winners; and

- The annual changing of the guard of new PHCC officers.

For more information and updates, be sure to check the PHCC website ([www.phccweb.org](http://www.phccweb.org)) and social media sites!

## **Save the Date!**

### **CONNECT heads to the Lone Star Next**

**They say everything is bigger in Texas! Fueled by the incredible momentum in Florida during CONNECT 2015, PHCC already is making big plans for CONNECT 2016. Come partner with your peers in San Antonio. Mark your calendars now...Oct. 19-21 at the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter.**



**The Connect '15 Opening Reception was held poolside and oceanside.**



**Lori Abbott, Tom Gent, SJ Peters and Jeff Weiss enjoy the poolside reception.**



**President Erik Graybeal and his wife Janice listening intently at the Bradford White Breakfast**



**Retiring PHCC EVP Gerry Kennedy**



**Chairman Bob Melko (on far right) conducts a UAC Trustees meeting during Connect '15.**



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# PHCC NATIONAL ASSOCIATION & AUXILIARY ELECT NEW OFFICERS

The following were elected and installed on October 2, 2015 at the Diplomat Hotel in Hollywood, Florida.

## **PHCC National Association:**

President: Charles "Chip" E. Greene, Greene & Associates, Inc., Macon, Ga.

President-elect: Patrick Wallner, Wallner Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning, Redding, Calif.

Vice President: Laurie Crigler, L & D Associates, Inc., Aroda, Va.

Secretary: Jennifer Warren, Warren-Hay Mechanical Contractors, Inc., Hillsborough, N.C.

Secretary-designate: Arnie Rodio, Pace Setter Plumbing Corp.; Lancaster, Calif.

Zone Directors: Zone 1: Ken Nielsen, AccuAire, Inc., Reading, Mass.; Zone 2: Joel Long, GSM Services, Inc., Gastonia, N.C.; Zone 3: Bill Buckingham, South West Plumbing & Waterheaters, Inc.; Seattle, Wash.; and Zone 4: Pat Freund, Primo Plumbing, San Antonio, Texas

AEC President: Mike McGraw, PHCC of Pennsylvania, Downingtown, PA

Auxiliary President: Angie Westman, Westman Plumbing, Inc., Aitkin, Minn.

## **2015 PHCC National Auxiliary Officers:**

President: Angie Westman, Richfield, Minn.

President-elect: Lynne Finley, New Orleans, La.

Vice President: Greta Fischer, Seattle, Wash.

Membership Secretary: Barb Kreifels, Lincoln, Neb.

Recording Secretary: Janice Voss, Boone, N.C.

Treasurer: Teresa Mayes, Knoxville, Tenn.

Marketing Secretary: Kelly Ruddy, Minneapolis, Minn.

Member at Large Representative: **Alicia Todd, Murphysboro, Ill.**



# ILLINOIS PHCC RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

The Illinois PHCC was presented with the Distinguished Chapter Designation during the PHCC National’s Chapter Excellence Awards presentation at the recent PHCC National Convention. The inscription on the award states “In Recognition of Outstanding Service to PHCC Members”. The award was given during the annual Chapter Leadership Lunch and was accepted on behalf of the association by President Eric Graybeal and Executive Director Bev Potts.



# BLOOMINGTON/NORMAL PHCC PRESENTED AWARD

The Bloomington/Normal PHCC was presented with the PHCC National’s **Chapter Excellence Award** at the recent PHCC National Convention. The inscription on the award states “In Recognition of Outstanding Achievement in Both Management

and Service to PHCC Members”. The award was presented during the annual Chapter Leadership Lunch and was accepted by President Erik Graybeal and Executive Director Bev Potts.



# TOP THREE PLUMBING APPRENTICES RECEIVE AWARDS AT CONNECT 2015

Three top plumbing apprentices received awards in the annual Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors–National Association (PHCC) Educational Foundation’s National Plumbing Apprentice Contest, held Oct. 1 in Hollywood, Fla.

The Foundation’s Plumbing Apprentice and Journeyman Training Committee members were on hand to set up and judge the contest, which was a highlight of the PHCC–National Association’s CONNECT 2015 Product & Technology Showcase.

## **This year’s awards went to:**

1st Place – James Peterson, John J. Maurer, Inc., Cataumet, Mass. – sponsored by A. O. Smith

2nd Place – Jared Beninati, Evan Hibbs Plumbing, Portsmouth, Va. – sponsored by Milwaukee Tool

3rd Place – David Spaeth, Harty Mechanical, Austin, Minn. – sponsored by Uponor

## **Foundation volunteers operating this year’s event included:**

Bob Carpenter, SharkBite/Cash Acme, Reliance Worldwide Corp., Atlanta, Ga.

J. Daniel Crigler, III, L & D Associates, Inc., Aroda, Va.

**Tom Gent, France Mechanical Corp.,  
Edwardsville, Ill.**

Victor Hatcher, Tyler Pipe & Coupling, Tyler, Tex.

Andrew Kireta, Jr., Copper Development Association, New York, N.Y.

Harold Moret, Copper Development Association, Sarasota, Fla.

Vic Poma, Universal Plumbing & Heating Co., Las Vegas, Nev.

Patrick Sheridan, SharkBite/Cash Acme, Reliance Worldwide Corp., Atlanta, Ga.

Jim Steinle, Atomic Plumbing, Virginia Beach, Va.

James Walls, Cast Iron Soil Pipe Institute, Garland, Tex.

Luke Westman, Westman Plumbing, Inc., Aitkin, Minn.

The event was made possible by the following generous industry sponsors:

**Headline Sponsors:** A. O. Smith Water Products Co.; Channellock; Copper Development Association, Inc.; Delta Faucet Company; IPS Corporation; Uponor; Viega, LLC; and Zoeller Company.

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## **Additional prize and materials sponsors**

**included:** AB&I Foundry; Atomic Plumbing; Bemis Manufacturing Co.; BrassCraft Manufacturing Co.; Caddy; Cast Iron Soil Pipe Institute; Channellock; Charlotte Pipe & Foundry; Cimberio

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**About PHCC Educational Foundation**

*The PHCC Educational Foundation, a partnership of contractors, manufacturers, and wholesalers, was founded in 1987 to serve the plumbing-heating-cooling industry by preparing contractors and their employees to meet the challenges of a constantly changing marketplace. For more information contact a member of the Foundation staff at (800) 533-7694 or visit [www.phccweb.org](http://www.phccweb.org).*



**Tom Gent of the Illinois PHCC has served as a volunteer for the plumbing apprentice contest for over 20 years. We thank Tom for his continued dedication to the Foundation and the industry.**



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# ILLINOIS AUXILIARY RECEIVES TWO ROBERT M. COX HUMANITARIAN AWARDS

The prestigious Robert M. Cox Humanitarian Awards recognize outstanding efforts by a state or local Auxiliary in two categories: image and recruitment. Judging is based on the impact an auxiliary has made on the p-h-c industry or local community, joint cooperation between Auxiliary and contractor association, and the description of the implementation of the activity and results achieved. First and second prizes and honorable mentions each receive a monetary award.

Image 1st Place – PHCC Auxiliary of Lincoln, NE

**Image 2nd Place – PHCC Auxiliary of Illinois**

Image Honorable Mention – PHCC Auxiliary of North Carolina

Recruitment 1st Place – PHCC Auxiliary of North Carolina

Recruitment 2nd Place – PHCC Auxiliary of Delaware

**Recruitment Honorable Mention – PHCC Auxiliary of Illinois**

Pictured accepting the awards on October 2nd in Hollywood, Florida are: (L-R) Past President Barb Page, Chelsea Hood, Secretary Fran Page, President Alicia Todd, Treasurer Becky Davis, and Shelby McBurney.



**Congratulations to the Illinois Auxiliary  
on these very deserving awards.**



# TOP THREE HVAC APPRENTICES RECEIVE AWARDS AT CONNECT 2015

Three top HVAC apprentices received awards in the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors–National Association (PHCC) Educational Foundation’s third annual National HVAC Apprentice Contest, held on Sept. 30-Oct. 1 in Hollywood, Fla.

The Foundation’s HVACR Apprentice and Journeyman Training Committee members were on hand to set up and judge the contest, which was a highlight of the PHCC–National Association’s CONNECT 2015 Product & Technology Showcase. A portion of the contest was hosted by the HVAC program at Sheridan Technical College in Hollywood, Fla., and technical assistance was provided by UA Local 725 and the Air Conditioning, Refrigeration and Pipefitting Education Center in Opa Locka, Fla.

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## This year’s awards went to:

1st Place – Michael Pethe, UA Local 172 Training Center, South Bend, Ind. – sponsored by NIBCO Inc.

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# DRAINLINE TRANSPORT OF SOLID WASTE IN BUILDINGS—PHASE 2 STUDY RELEASED

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The Plumbing Efficiency Research Coalition (PERC) is pleased to announce that Phase 2 of the long-anticipated study, *The Drainline Transport of Solid Waste in Buildings – Phase 2*, has been released and is now available on the PERC website. The study builds on the findings of the Phase 1 report of the same title and provides new and important insights into the performance of building drains as water flows are incrementally reduced as a result of water efficiency related regulations.

**Background:** PERC was formed in 2009 through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop research projects that support the development of water efficiency and sustainable plumbing products, systems, and practices. PERC identified drainline transport as its first research project. The six members of the coalition are represented by Mary Ann Dickinson, Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE); Billy Smith, American Society of Plumbing Engineers (ASPE), Peter DeMarco, International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO); Lee Clifton, International Code Council (ICC); Gerry Kennedy, Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors–National Association (PHCC); and Barbara C. Higgins, Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI).

The PERC Phase 2 report addresses several important areas of study that were not included in the Phase 1 effort. Importantly, the study evaluates the potential for a sanitary pipe size reduction to improve drainline transport characteristics and help to facilitate further flow reductions in plumbing fixtures. As with the Phase 1 report, the study applies to commercial building drains, as they present the greatest risk for chronic blockages resulting from water flow reductions.

The PERC Phase 1 study was both informative and influential. In 2013, the U.S. EPA cited the report's findings that high efficiency toilets (HETs) flushing

at a maximum of 1.28 gallons per flush provided satisfactory drainline transport as justification to move forward with a WaterSense specification for commercial HETs and flushometer-valves.

“The PERC Phase 2 study goes further,” said IAPMO’s Pete DeMarco, who again acted as the technical director for the Phase 2 study.

Phase 2 provides insights regarding conditions that can trigger a tipping point where incremental flow reductions are increasingly likely to result in chronic drain blockages in commercial buildings. The findings also detail the surprising significance of toilet paper in drainline transport, relative to other variable factors such as drainline slope, pipe diameter, and toilet flush volume levels.

“PERC feels that the Phase 2 report will provide new and valuable insights to the engineering community, plumbing trades, facility managers, and regulators regarding the continued efficacy of sanitary building drains as we seek to make our plumbing systems as efficient as possible while maintaining health and safety,” DeMarco said.

PERC plans to publish a supplemental report, PERC Phase 2.1, early in 2016. The supplemental report will provide a preliminary investigation on the impact of dual flush toilet discharges and slope deviations on drainline transport efficacy.

## **For More Information Contact:**

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Lee Clifton - lclifton@iccsafe.org

Mary Ann Dickinson - maryann@a4we.org

Pete DeMarco – pete.demarco@iapmo.org



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# FIVE FRUSTRATING VOICE MAIL PHRASES

by Nancy Friedman, The Telephone Doctor

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Normally, I bet my audiences the cash that's in their wallet that they have one or more of these phrases on their cell or office phone at that moment. I've never had to pay!

When was the last time you checked your own voice mail message? It's probably been a while. Well, now's the time to double check it. Because I'm betting you have one or more of the frustrating phrases on your voice mail.

I don't. If you don't, congratulations! Here they are:

## 1. Hi, I'm not here right now.

DUH? Well, that's a hot lot of news. What a boring, semi useless statement. Live a little. Let your callers know where you ARE – not where you're not. Tell them, "I AM in the office all this week" OR "I'm in a sales meeting till 3 pm." Let them know if you do or don't check messages. Let them know when you will be back. No one is terribly interested where you're NOT. They are interested in where you ARE.

## 2. Your call is very important to me.

OMG. Seriously? A big time waster. The caller

is thinking, "Well, if I'm so darn important, where the heck are you?" And then again, think about it. Maybe the call isn't so important to you. You don't need this phrase. Semi-useless.

## 3. I'm sorry I missed your call.

How dull. How average. Of course you're sorry you missed the call. (Although, there may be some calls you're not so sorry to have missed.) It's OK to leave this phrase out! It's a given. Use the time and space for something more valuable. Like where you are and when you will return. Or, who they can call for more information.

## 4. I'll call you back as soon as possible.

Well, what's wrong with that Nancy? Everyone has it. Not everyone. Not me. Not my husband. It's not interesting and not fun. Mainly because your "as soon as possible" and my "as soon as possible" and "their as soon as possible" may not be, and probably are not, the same.

The truth is most people aren't returning their phone calls in a timely fashion (if at all). If you're telling your callers you'll call them back, make sure you do.

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Continued on page 22

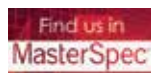


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# FIVE FRUSTRATING VOICE MAIL PHRASES CONTINUED

Don't wanna return the call? Have it returned on your behalf. Not returning a phone call is like not using your turn signal when changing lanes. RUDE! Be classy. Don't be a 'no show.'

## 5. No escape.

Offer the caller another name or extension. Main point here is to offer an alternative when you're not available. Plus, you've bought back some time to say something more interesting or helpful to the caller.

Well, Nancy, Ms. Smarty Pants, what should be on my voice mail? That's next month, folks ... stay tuned.

**Nancy Friedman is a humorous keynote speaker at association, franchise and corporate meetings & events. A customer service expert, Nancy is the author of eight books on sales, customer service and communication skills. She can be reached at 314-291-1012 or at [www.nancyfriedman.com](http://www.nancyfriedman.com) or by email at [nancyf@telephonedoctor.com](mailto:nancyf@telephonedoctor.com).**

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# HR QUESTION ? of the month



## ***Preparing documentation for a termination?***

**Question:** One of my staff went almost 7 whole days without clocking in or out on our web-based time card system. She said it was her computer but it mysteriously started working the day after my accounting person pointed it out to her. We've been unhappy with her work performance and reliability (late almost every day). I want to start documenting for when we do let her go so there is no recourse for her to file. Her supervisor wants to try to avoid paying unemployment, if that is even possible. I have one item in her file already from last October that we had her sign regarding her tardiness. Do you have advice on what I should do to document to her file? She is not in any of the protected classes as far as I am aware. Does she have to sign the warning for it to be official or can I just tell her I put a note her in file?

**Answer:** We are delighted to offer general guidance in terms of how the employer should go about documenting an employee's performance and/or conduct issues. Generally, when documenting disciplinary action, the employer should (a) identify the performance or conduct that is unsatisfactory or deficient; (b) notify the employee of what needs to improve (and if there is a timetable, what that is -- although the employer should avoid any language that is or could be construed as contractual); and (c) what the consequences will be if the employee does not make and sustain the requisite improvement needed. Ultimately, a write-up or written warning should make clear that although it is intended to bring about necessary improvement so that the employee can remain a productive member of the organization, it should not deteriorate the at-will nature of the employment relationship (assuming it is already at-will and that there is not any other progressive disciplinary policy governing the situation), and that the employer can still terminate employment at-will (just as the employee can quit at-will, too).

The important thing to keep in mind is that when disciplinary action is issued, whether it is verbal or written, it should be clear and consistent with how the employer has addressed performance deficiencies or conduct issues in the past in similar situations, to avoid discrimination claims. The employee can and should be asked to sign written disciplinary documents and can receive a copy of it, with the original being placed in his or her personnel file. Employees who refuse to sign it can be disciplined or discharged if that is consistent with policy/practice; either way the employer can note "refused to sign" on the form or document if that is the case.

When it comes to eligibility for unemployment compensation benefits, generally, employees who are terminated for performance issues or simple policy violations may be awarded benefits. Determinations for an award of benefits, however, are made on a case-by-case basis by the hearing court officer.

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## 2015-2016 Continuing Education for Illinois Licensed Plumbers

<u>Date/Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Fee</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> **September 18, 2015 – 1:00 pm-5:00 pm	John A. Logan College, Carterville, IL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> **September 19, 2015 – 8:00 am-12:00 pm	Kaskaskia College, Vandalia, IL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> **October 16, 2015 – 1:00 pm-5:00 pm	Hilton Garden Inn, Springfield, IL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> **November 6, 2015 – 1:00 pm-5:00 pm	Rend Lake Resort, Whittington, IL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> **January 8, 2016 – 1:00 pm-5:00 pm	*Heartland College, Bloomington/Normal, IL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> **February 19, 2016 – 1:00 pm-5:00pm	*Heartland College, Bloomington/Normal, IL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> **March 18, 2016 - 9:00 am -1:00pm	Drury Lane, Oakbrook Terrace, IL	\$35.00

**No Walkins – No Exceptions. All Registrations for the March 18 class must be received before March 1, 2016**

<input type="checkbox"/> **April 8, 2016 – 1:00 pm-5:00 pm	Rend Lake Resort, Whittington, IL	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> **April 22, 2016 - 1:00 pm-5:00 pm	*Heartland College, Bloomington/Normal, IL	\$75.00

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**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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## DON'T TAKE BACK PROBLEMS SITTING DOWN

Another important ToolBox Talk brought to you by the Quality Service Contractors (QSC) – An Enhanced Service Group of PHCC, P.O. Box 6808, Falls Church, VA 22040.

Ph. 800-533-7694. Visit our website at: <http://www.qsc-phcc.org>.

# Don't Take Back Problems Sitting Down

Why do so many of us have back problems today? In part, it's the way our work and lifestyle has evolved. As people grow more sedentary in an increasingly automated world, we're doing more sitting and adding extra pounds. As a result, our backs are becoming more vulnerable to injury.

Sitting especially slouching is one of the most common

positions during our waking hours. It also happens to be one of the worst positions for our backs, by putting continuous pressure on the lower back muscles and disks.

Low back pain is a warning that something is wrong. Recognize this warning and take steps to prevent a back problem from getting worse. Here are some helpful suggestions if you sit for long periods during the course of your workday.

- Choose the right chair, a chair that supports the length and width of your back with adjustable armrests and a seat height you can adjust.
- Sit smart. Sit straight and close to your work, don't slump forward. Your buttocks should rest against the back of the seat. Your knees



Slump/slouch



forced upright



poised/relaxed

should stick out a hand's width beyond the edge of the chair with your feet resting comfortably on the floor or footrest.

- Adjust your work height and angle. Your surface work and keyboard should be at elbow level. If you work at a computer, the top of your screen should be eye level.
- If possible, get up regularly and stretch or, shift your sitting position at least once every 30 minutes.

Vehicular vibration adds additional stress to the backs of those who drive long distances. Here's some back comfort tips for drivers.

- Position the seat forward so that your knees are bent. If the tilt of the seats can be adjusted, change the angle slightly every so often.
- Placing a cushion at the small of your back and sitting in a slightly reclining angle may ease pressure on your lower back while driving.
- Change your sitting position frequently or get out of the vehicle every hour and walk around for a few minutes.
- Grip the steering wheel at the nine and three o'clock hand positions. This puts your arms and shoulders in a more neutral position.

**There are also some general lifestyle choices which can reduce stress on your back. Sleep on a firm mattress, control your weight, getting some exercise, and for men, take that bulging wallet out of your back pocket when you sit. Make sitting a pleasure not a pain.**



## Saving water just got a lot easier and much better looking.

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