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Volume 9, Issue 9

2014 General Meeting Dates

Mark your Calendar!

October 9, 2014

Best Collection Practices for Contractors
 Tambellini's, Bridgeville

October TBA, 2014

2015 Planning Meeting

November 13, 2014

Drugs + Alcohol + Work Do Not Mix!
 Peter's Place, Bridgeville



Air Conditioning Contractors of America
ACCA

Is a non-profit association serving more than 60,000 professionals and 4,000 businesses in the indoor environmental and energy services community.

Founded 40+ years ago, ACCA sets the standards for quality comfort systems, provides leading-edge education for contractors and their employees, and fights for the interests of professional contractors in every state in the country.

ACCA is the only nationwide organization of, by, and for small businesses that design, install and maintain indoor environment and building performance systems.



PA State Chapter Update...

PA State Chapter ready to hold Executive Officer Elections!

ACCA Contractors:

The inaugural board has been operating for the past few months. Our main goal has been to do the leg work so that the first official Executive Board can be voted in and take office January 2015. The framework would be in place and the new board can go about the business of running the PA State Chapter.

Our stated mission statement is:

The mission of ACCA-PA is to promote quality and professionalism, to help our members become more successful, and to enhance the HVAC/R industry's image to the consumer.

The primary functions the new board will concentrate on is State wide training opportunities and establishing a watchdog network to keep members aware of government issues that affect our industry.

We will be looking for contractors who would like to serve on the board or assist in any way. Elections will be held in November to fill the positions of:

- **President**
- **Vice President** (President in waiting)
- **Secretary**
- **Treasure**

Once the Executive Board is set, they will appoint contractor members to help carry out the work of the board.

Please contact me if you have any questions, or would like to put your name on the ballot for one of the positions or to be considered for a contractor board member.

Bob Boyle
PA State Board, Co-Chair Interim President
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A Plug for Electrical Fire Prevention – Federated Ins.

In our technology-centered lives, we tend to take for granted what ultimately makes all our gadgets work: electricity! We rush to “plug in” and generally don’t think twice about the power that keeps us connected.

To bring attention to a growing hazard and to coincide with 2014 National Fire Prevention Week (October 5-11), let’s discuss electricity—a power source that’s similarly taken for granted and often ignored as a fire risk.

Extension Cords

Extension cords are useful for temporary wiring needs. The key word here is *temporary*. Extension cords should never be used as a permanent fix for reaching a primary power supply.

Extension cord fire risk is mainly from overload. Overloads occur when extension cords are carrying more current than they are capable of, which can cause the plug, socket, or the entire cord to heat up. If the cord is near some easily combustible material, the excess heat could ignite a fire.

Cord size and capacity must meet or exceed the requirements of the device being plugged into it. For example, a tool needing 14 amps must be powered by an extension cord with a minimum capacity of 14 amps. This is particularly important for longer cords, since power capacity diminishes with length.

Power Strips

Country singer Trace Adkins made headlines in 2011 because of a fire that burned down his house. Investigators determined the fire started in the garage...from an overheated power strip.

Have you ever “discovered” a power strip hidden beneath dusty, forgotten piles of papers or other things? We probably all have and didn’t even consider the potential risk. But think about this: That buried power strip may be generating heat that could, over time, lead to combustion of whatever material it’s near.

Most power strips have the capacity to power multiple items, or the equivalent of 15 amps. The power draw of each item should be considered before plugging in additional devices. As items are added, the chances increase for overheating and overloading the power strip.

Power Load

Knowing what types of electrical setups your company has is just the basis of a proactive fire prevention risk management plan. As electrical use increases, attention must be paid to the overall load on the entire system. Recognizable warning signs of inadequate load may be as slight as lights dimming when equipment turns on, to a more urgent indication like a breaker that continually trips. All workers should be aware of the warning signs, as early detection of electrical issues is a valuable preventive for fires. If your electrical system is showing signs of being insufficient, a competent electrical contractor should be consulted. This is especially important before installing any new machinery or whenever electrical problems are noticed.

Daisy Chaining

Daisy chaining refers to an unsafe method of linking extension cords or power strips together in any combination, which can present undue fire risk and should never be allowed. The main reason people set up daisy chains is from a need for either more cord length or more outlets. Both situations create increased stress on the power strip or extension cord that is plugged into the main outlet. That plug will have the most load and be increasingly stressed with each item added to the “chain.”

The Burning Issue of Electrical Fires

There are so many good reasons to pay attention to the electrical system your business uses every day. Not only will awareness help decrease the risk of electric shock and fire, you could also see more efficient use of power and less maintenance needed.

Conscientious awareness and fire prevention tactics can actually contribute to your company’s fiscal fitness. The costs for electrical system improvements or a stepped-up maintenance program can generally be absorbed. But the costs from a fire can mean the difference between staying in business or not. By incorporating risk management strategies, you are taking important steps toward helping to keep your employees and business safe.

Federated Insurance has developed a **Fire Prevention Packaged Program**, which includes specific checklists and resources for your fire prevention and educational efforts. Contact your local Federated marketing representative or John **Ballard, Account Executive 859-312-9896** for more information.

EDUCATION & EVENTS

To register : www.acca.org

Building Performance Forum

October 7 & 8, 2014

Service Managers Forum

October 9 & 10, 2014

Residential Design For Quality Installation

Nov. 18 - 20, 2014



SmartWords You Must Remember

I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back."

-Maya Angelou-

Product Spotlight

Mastering Core Service

Learn how to successfully take and pass the NATE Service Core Exam – the fundamentals to general, construction and HVACR-specific knowledge required for certification.

To learn more about this and other tools ACCA has to offer, visit: www.acca.org/store.

March 16/19, 2015 ACCA National Convention

The single largest source of contractor education in the country!



Working With Customers Who Live In High Crime Areas

Posted by Melinda Wamsley; Date: June 13, 2014 IE3 ACCA

In tough economic times, one of the priorities of the contracting sector is how to ensure the safety and security of not only their employees; but also their equipment, vehicles, and physical buildings.

Crime rates tend to increase in a worsening economy, and as financial restraints kick in, police departments endure personnel and budget cuts. Community programs that help direct at-risk youth away from crime and violence also suffer from financial restrictions. All of these conspire to endanger the safety of your colleagues and your property.

Fortunately, it's not all bad news. There are several solutions you can implement based on your company's individual budget and risk factors.

START AT HOME BASE. Protect your company's building and storage yard. Many companies are located in industrial parks or other areas that do not have regular night patrols. Take a look outside your building. Are there overgrown shrubs or other hiding places that should be eliminated? Is the outside of the building well illuminated? What about the storage yard and parking lot?

Does your building have a surface that is graffiti resistant? (If not, there are various grades of commercially available remedies such as graffiti resistant coatings.)

Consider installing a security system. Many companies put off this expense until after their first burglary. When they realize the replacement costs, an alarm system fee seems small in comparison.

PROTECT YOUR TEAM, AT HOME AND IN THE FIELD. Do you have an ongoing relationship with crime-prevention groups in the community? Can your employees call for immediate help in the event of impending violence? Are there established procedures to follow regarding threatening circumstances?

It is prudent to have a process to ensure employees are informed about specific high-risk locations or clients. Are there actions for workers to follow when dealing with aggressive customers? Are employees armed with personal protection alarms or personal defense items? (If so, they should be trained by a professional on how to use them.)

Employee training should touch on several safety points, such as keeping the service vehicle gassed up and in good working order, and keeping windows shut and doors locked. Employees should know to be observant of the safety of the immediate environment. If the situation is threatening or openly **hostile**, they should feel comfortable calling dispatch to report the problem and awaiting management's advice or resolution from a safe location.

PROTECT YOUR EQUIPMENT. There are numerous ways to keep your equipment large, and small, safe from theft or vandalism.

ACCA – How Do We Do IT!!!

We write the standards for the design, maintenance, installation, testing, and performance of indoor environment systems. We bring contractors together with other contractors through unique learning opportunities and online communities. We provide exclusive technical, legal, and marketing resources. We bring customers to our members, since they come to our website trying to find quality contractors. And we fight aggressively for contracting business interests in Washington, DC and in every state in the country.

High Crime - continued

Employee training should touch on several safety points, such as keeping the service vehicle gassed up and in good working order, and keeping windows shut and doors locked. Employees should know to be observant of the safety of the immediate environment. If the situation is threatening or openly **hostile**, they should feel comfortable calling dispatch to report the problem and awaiting management's advice or resolution from a safe location. **PROTECT YOUR EQUIPMENT.** There are numerous ways to keep your equipment large, and small, safe from theft or vandalism.

Vehicles: One of a company's major investments is in its service fleet. Make sure you have adequate insurance on these vehicles. Many insurers provide a discount if the vehicle is alarmed and has extra security measures, such as extra exterior door locks. An inexpensive tool to keep thieves from stealing gasoline, or keep vandals from adding unwanted substances to gas tanks is a locking gas cap.

It is also wise to have a tracking device installed to allow the police to recover the service truck more easily in the event it is taken.

Randy Gibbs of Brody-Pennell Heating and Cooling in Los Angeles, CA, says "Our employees take the service vehicle home with them at the end of the shift if they have a secure place to park it, such as behind a gate. If not, they store it overnight in our fenced yard."

Instruct colleagues to always keep the doors locked and the security measures engaged, even if they are just making a quick stop. Valuables should always be kept out of sight. In the event of a carjacking, employees should be trained that the loss of equipment is always preferable to employee injury.

Large Equipment: There are several ways to outsmart thieves and vandals at job sites where large equipment might have to be stored overnight.

Create a temporary fenced, well lighted storage yard with a lockable gate

Paint owned equipment distinctive colors, with logos and identifying marks (even on roofs to allow police see it being towed away on a trailer)

Tools: Small, portable tools account for some of the greatest loss in the contracting sector. Consider insuring these items.



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Indoor Environmental & Energy Professionals

ACCA Upcoming Meetings

October 9, 2014

Best Collection Practices for
Contractors
Thomas E. Weiers, Jr., Esq.
Tambellini's, Bridgeville

November 13, 2014

Drugs + Alcohol + Work Do Not Mix!
John Ballard, Federated Insurance
Peter's Place, Bridgeville

December 2014

No general meeting.



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