

Pennsylvania



LICA

Since 1970

Here's some of what we learned at the 2022 PALICA State Conference in March...

DID YOU KNOW.....

- *If you have any medical records of any kind in your personal files etc, you have to have HIPPA Training?*
- *If you or any employees run manlifts, you/they need operator training to be legal?*
- *All powered hand tools require training.*
- *An OSHA inspector can request to speak to an employees on the job alone, but that employee can say he wants his boss/foreman present and they have to wait until that person shows up before questioning can continue.*
- **PENNDOT has done away with weight class stickers (SEE PAGE 12 FOR MORE INFO)**

These are just some of the things that many at the conference DID NOT KNOW. We will be offering regional educational classes that cover topics such as these for all our members. We're looking at an eastern PA class in June and a western PA class later in the summer. Watch your mail and email for more dates and details to be a well-informed employer.



DOT Office Brian Carpenter (above) and Monica Rakoczy (below) held classes at the conference – *DOT Regulations and The Top OSHA Citations for 2021*. They each supplied the info listed to the left called... **"DID YOU KNOW...."**



PALICA
775 MERCER ROAD
GREENVILLE PA 16125

TO:



President's Message

Outgoing President Chris Moore pinning
Barry President at the Conference

Hello, Let me introduce myself, I'm Barry Mutzabaugh Jr., your newly elected President of PALICA. First let me start off by thanking all that came out to make the winter conference a great success! My wife and I thoroughly enjoyed it and learned so much. Thank you also for taking a chance on me as President. I have enjoyed getting to know LICA and those involved in it. I look forward to a great year. We would like to get more member involvement in the upcoming year. We are having a meeting on May 14th @ 4pm in Clarion, PA and all are welcome (see details below). Please come out and get involved. Find out what is going on within PALICA, along with all the trainings, safety, products and business support that are offered. Can't wait to see you there!

Your President,

Barry Mutzabaugh

P.S. You will be well fed after the meeting!

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Joanie Micksy

775 Mercer Road

Greenville, PA 16125

724-866-1082

Email: Pennsylvanialica@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS: Mark your Calendars!!

1. MAY 14, 2022 – BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING (OPEN TO ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP)
 - 4:00 PM @ THE RAMADA BY WYNDHAM IN CLARION, 45 HOLIDAY INN ROAD, CLARION PA
 - DINNER WILL FOLLOW FOR ALL THAT ATTEND SO PLEASE THINK ABOUT JOINING US TO SHARE YOUR IDEAS ON HOW YOU'D LIKE TO SEE PALICA GROW AND THE DIRECTION WE SEE IN THE COMING YEAR.
 - RSVP TO JOANIE BY MAY 10TH SO WE MAKE SURE WE HAVE ENOUGH SPACE FOR MEETING AND DINNER.
2. THE SUMMER PICNIC WILL BE HELD AT BARRY MUTZABAUGH'S AGAIN THIS YEAR ON SATURDAY JULY 23RD WHERE SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS WILL BE PRESENTED, AFTER THE BOARD MEETING, ALONG WITH DELICIOUS BBQ! WATCH FOR MORE INFO ON OUR WEBSITE.

ASSOCIATES ADVERTISING

Pennsylvania One Call 811	PG 6
BRON	PG 10
Drainage Tile Safety Coalition	PG 13
CASE – Eagle Equipment	PG 15
Carry Pumps	PG 15
Prins Insurance/UFG	PG 16
Bower's Great Lake Drainage	PG 19
TOPCON Solutions Store	PG 20
CASE- Groff Tractor & Equip	PG 21
THE BIG SWITCH-BEG GROUP	-back cover

Joe Greco from the BEG Group has been a very supportive Associate Member since joining PALICA in 2019. **(One of the many reasons he was awarded the 2021 Associate of the Year).** He has attended or sponsored many of our meetings and events as well, **and now he's offering PALICA members an opportunity to save with his new benefit.** The benefit details are below but feel free to contact Joe directly for more info. There isn't a phone call he hasn't taken when I've needed something – I'm sure you'll find the same thing!



www.biosecurity.biz

Big Switch® is a highly qualified/exceptionally valued 100% USDA biopreferred compost sediment filter that gives you the erosion control you need. The Big Switch® is oval to round in cross-section, designed to provide a three-dimensional medium that retains sediment and other pollutants (e.g., suspended solids, tannic acid, nitrates, phosphates, and motor oil) while allowing the cleaned water to flow through. Because The Big Switch® Erosion-Filtration Medium has greater surface area contact with soil than typical sediment control devices, it reduces the potential for runoff to create rills under the device and/or create channels carrying unfiltered sediment and comes in 4", 8", 12", 18", 24" and 32" diameter.



PA LICA BENEFIT: 2% net 10 off for paying your invoice within 10 days. Plus, 5 % price reduction for 6 sacks of any sized diameter product ordered at the same time. Offer may change without prior notification.

Here are a few types of the erosion/filtration capabilities of **Big Switch®**:

- Erosion/Sediment Control
- Pollutant Removal
- Stormwater Management
- Slip Repair



The 2022 PALICA State Conference was a wonderful 3 days earlier this month. Margi Gras was our theme and everyone enjoyed the decorations. We started out the weekend on Thursday, March 3rd with the Board of Directors and the Annual Meetings, followed by pizza and cocktails in our hospitality suite at the Toftrees Golf Resort in State College. It was great to spend time in a causal setting prior to the classes starting on Friday.



Friday brought 5 great classes – we started with DOT officer Brian Carpenter doing a walk around outside, and an indoor classroom set up to answer questions and test what we learned. **A video was shown from the Drain Tile Safety Coalition called “Three Seconds Later” showing what can happen when utility lines aren’t marked correctly.** Joe Giovinazzo from Petrocon updated everyone on all his products and how they can benefit your businesses. **UFG did a Distracted Driving class at the same time** and then Mark Novad from J L Nick & Associates put on a fantastic HR presentation – we’re looking forward to having him back next year. **Ron Metcho from Margolis and Edelstein Law Firm addressed issues business owners face.** Associates Night supplied everyone with a lot of fun, great Mardi Gras themed food, and a fantastic auction raising more than \$3,600 for our scholarship fund. We had our comedian pair up with Bruce Mosier prior to his performance to serve as Co-Auctioneers. What a fantastic night!! The ladies had a fun time going for some spa treatments on Friday afternoon and on Saturday they took a *How to Design a Succulent Garden* class and that was a huge hit. Everyone enjoyed the staff and accommodations at Toftrees and we’ve booked the resort for next year!





Left: Allison Pruskowski was awarded the 2021 PALICA Contractors Wife of the Year - pictured with Evelyn Cottrell of the awards committee. Jeremy Pruskowski is her husband and together they own J & A Excavating.



Right: Joe Greco was awarded the 2021 Associate of the Year with his BEG Group – pictured with Nancy Micsky of the awards committee. Check out the Spring National Magazine as there is a feature news story on The BEG Group!



Left: Barry Mutzabaugh Jr. was awarded the 2021 Contractor of the Year the night after being elected PALICA President for 2022. A big weekend for Barry!!



Right: Joanie Micsky was awarded the Corky Miles Award for her work and dedication to grow the association as Executive Director. The nomination came from past Executive Directors' Evelyn Cottrell and Nancy Micsky

Congratulations to Jim Addison on being named an Honorary Member of PALICA. Jim has been a member since 1970 and served on the board of directors for many years. We appreciated Jim and his wife Jane making the trip to State College to receive his award in person and spend time with fellow members.

Pennsylvania LICA has named two additional Honorary members (see box to the right).



Mr. Ralph Porterfield and Mr. Clint Brown are also being declared Honorary Member of Pennsylvania LICA -- both having been very involved with PALICA over the years. We have delivered plaques to them and hope to see them in person next February in State College, if not before. Thank you for your service to PALICA over the years!

REMINDERS:



- Scholarship applications are due to PALICA by March 31, 2022.
(applications are on the website)
- Send me your first PA One Call Invoice of the year either by email, fax or snail mail so I can get that taken care of for you -- it's part of your membership dues. (SEE EXAMPLE BELOW)
- Check out the PALICA website to get updates on the 811 Show in your area this coming summer and fall. It's their 50th Anniversary so they are spreading out over the state to meet with as many contractors as possible this year.
- Remember if you sponsor a new member to PALICA, you will receive a \$50 SHEETZ gift card. Our current members are our best advertisers so next time you're with a fellow contractor, strike up a conversation about PALICA.

Pennsylvania One Call System, Inc.

I've placed an excavation notification with Pennsylvania One Call System, Inc., and received a \$125 invoice. How can I get PENNSYLVANIA LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRS ASSOCIATION to pay this invoice?

One more reason to belong to PENNSYLVANIA LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRS ASSOCIATION: Follow these four simple steps, and you will not be obligated to pay the Pennsylvania One Call System, Inc. invoice. That's a \$125.00 savings!

1 Receive an invoice from PA One Call System in 2022.

Mail or fax your invoice to:

2 PENNSYLVANIA LAND IMPROVEMENT
CONTRS ASSOCIATION
775 Mercer Road
Greenville, PA 16125

fax - 724-475-4479

email: PennsylvaniaLica@gmail.com

3 Your association verifies your membership then sends the invoice to PA One Call System

4 No Payment Required – your account will be credited



Message from National LICA President Chris Wagner:- Chris shared this info with un in State College earlier this month and I wanted everyone who wasn't able to attend to get to hear it as well.

LICA Educational Foundation for Veterans:

I was delighted to once again be invited and attend the PALICA State Conference in February. I was asked to talk about the progress being made with The LICA Educational Foundation for Veterans at the Members Meeting. What follows is what was presented to those at the meeting so all members can be updated.

In the short six months between Niagara Falls and San Antonio, a logo was developed, a website designed, a GoFundme account was created, and a federal grant was applied for. A John Peterson letter campaign resulted in an endorsement from NRCS. John Weatherhead released two email blasts using Scranton Gillette's mailing list with 71,791 emails going out each time. Also, a direct mail fundraising appeal was designed. This is an astounding accomplishment. Equally astounding is that through the hard work of Eddy Mayen, the North Jersey United Way has endorsed our Foundation. They are one of the largest non-profit organizations in the United States funding many other non-profits.

This was all made possible because of money donated to the Foundation. The first seed money was personally donated by Jerry Biuso. This was followed by many personal, business, LICA members, and LICA State Chapter donations. New Jersey, Michigan, New York and Missouri LICA all donated to the Foundation. Over \$37,000 has been collected thus far.

After three hard months of work the Foundation has applied for an un-matched grant written by Eddy Mayen to the tune of almost \$20,000,000. This means the foundation will not need to match the grant funding. We will know sometime this summer if the Foundation received any money.

Through these donations and the grant, the Foundation is developing a curriculum that will provide a full-cycle training program for unemployed veterans to work in the heavy equipment construction industry. This training offers classroom, simulator, and hands-on training at job sites within and outside of the LICA member network. This program will ensure each veteran's job-readiness.

Our first big fundraiser is a golf outing on May 2 at the Cantigny Golf Course in Wheaton, Illinois. If you cannot come out and play, there are many of the usual sponsorships available if you would like to help the cause. We currently have 27 Tee and Green sponsors and are looking to double up on each hole.

LICA was founded on the principal of protecting the land we work on, the land that provides food and water, the land that provides wealth and our lifestyles. We now take the next step to provide for the men and women who protect us and allow us to protect the land we all love.

Chris Wagner, National LICA President



Pennsylvania 811

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For Safe Excavation and Complex Projects many people believe that by notifying the One Call System of intended excavation they have completed all of their responsibilities with respect to the locating process. This is not the case. Notifying is only the first step, and there are several other important considerations

Excavator Designer Web Access is a web service application developed by Pennsylvania 811 to provide excavators and designers a way to view their notifications and facility owners responses.

- View current tickets or five years worth of tickets
- Access to tickets entered online or through the call center
- Search for a specific ticket with an assigned serial number or a series of notifications within a specific date range
- See real time responses from facility owners who were notified on a current ticket or search the system for stored responses (maximum of 5 years)

Start today by requesting the application from your account





safety watch | by Amy Materson
AMaterson@randallreilly.com

Shock-proof yourself

Know the dangers of working around electricity

The accident: A crew was setting anchors in preparation for utility pole placement, using a boom truck with auger. Each anchor was attached to the auger using a coupling, which then used the auger motor to rotate the anchor and screw it into the ground. An anchor began to wobble during the setting process, and a crew member reached out to steady the anchor, unaware the extended boom had touched a 7,200-volt overhead power line. The anchor was energized, electrocuting the worker. He was pronounced dead from electrocution at the hospital.

The bottom line: A post-accident investigation found the crew member was not a regular employee, but part of a work release program and had no formal training in the utility construction industry. The training was provided on the job, but as a member of the work release program, the worker was unavailable for regularly scheduled safety training meetings. Additionally, the anchor was a replacement anchor that was more than 2 feet longer than the other anchors used on the project. When the crew tried to set the anchor, the additional length caused it to enter the ground at a difficult angle, creating the wobble that prompted the employee to try steadying the anchor, as well as creating a clearance issue with the overhead power line.



Illustration by Don Lomax

Unnecessary errors

Working around electricity without the proper training, as this crew member did, can be a fatal mistake. Without the proper training, you won't have the necessary tools to recognize jobsite hazards. The error was compounded by using the longer anchor – material that a jobsite survey would not have accounted for. Although the 6-foot anchors would have been approved by the competent person conducting the survey, once the 8-foot anchor was substituted, the survey would no longer have been applicable to this jobsite.

Safe steps

- Training – Attend all training sessions and tailgate talks to make sure you're ready to begin work.
- Awareness – Ask what particular hazards the jobsite survey found, and what steps have

been taken to mitigate the hazard. You should remain in a safe area while power is disconnected to the lines.

- Assessment – Before you begin work, walk the site and look for electrical hazards such as overhead power lines. Even if power has been disconnected from the line, stay away. If you're going to be working around them, always keep an eye on how far your equipment is from these lines, particularly when the boom is extended.

If substitute material is brought onto the jobsite, stop and assess what changes need to be made before continuing work. If there are clearance issues or other hazards created, don't continue work until the danger is mitigated.

For detailed information on controlling electrical hazards, visit [osha.gov/Publications/3075.html](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/3075.html).

EN0213

Information for this Safety Watch came from an accident report and the Center for Disease Control's NIOSH Fatality Assessment

and Control Evaluation Program. It is designed for general information only.

Date of safety talk: _____ Leader: _____
Attending: _____

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Untangling the Supply-Chain Crisis: What are Manufacturers Doing?



**EQUIPMENT
WORLD**
BY RANDALL REILLY

Heavy equipment and parts are in short supply, inventories are low, and prices have been escalating for two years. Most people blame Covid-19, but Benjamin Duyck, director of market intelligence at the Association of Equipment Manufacturers, says the virus is not the only problem.

Benjamin Duyck, director of market intelligence, Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) Association of Equipment Manufacturers Duyck is one of three experts put together for a webinar on the topic organized by the [Association of Equipment Management Professionals \(AEMP\) Triangle Talks](#) last week. (In Part 2 of our series, we will look at the impact of the supply chain crisis on equipment dealers, and Part 3 will dive into how this has affected contractors, equipment prices and availability.)

The [supply chain issues](#) have been building for a long time, says Duyck. “Covid-19 was just an unforeseen shock that exposed larger, [ongoing trends](#).” The confluence of these trends created the perfect storm as Covid hit in early 2020. The trends include a [shrinking workforce](#), supply chain bottlenecks, higher than expected demand and an expansionary monetary policy.

“More than 95% of our AEM members are experiencing supply chain issues,” says Duyck. “For 70% of the OEMs, these issues are getting worse. On the component side, about 45% are having issues.”

Where are the workers?

Some of the depletion in the workforce is a result of Covid-19, says Duyck, but the larger trend of a shrinking labor pool has been an issue for more than a decade.

“It’s clear that hiring is a strain on our industries,” he says. “It’s a little bit more of an issue on the manufacturing floor rather than the office. On the office side, we see improvements over time.”

Bottlenecks

“Given the widespread nature of supply chains, bottlenecks are not only endemic to our industries but to the global economy as well,” says Duyck. Some of the bottlenecks equipment manufacturers are experiencing include:

(CON’T PG 9)

1. Depleted inventories. “That’s the number one thing we see in our member surveys,” says Duyck. “On the agricultural equipment side, several categories are depleted all the way back to 2010 levels. It’s not just the inventory of equipment but the materials in the supply chain. This leads to difficult choices for component manufacturers.”

2. International shipping. “When you have a shock like Covid-19 it can disrupt the way the global supply chain works,” says Duyck. “You have difficulties coordinating international shipping and container shortages.”

3. Demand. Supply chains were caught on the wrong side of the demand curve, cutting back on production as demand accelerated. “On the construction equipment side, demand was much higher than expected,” says Duyck. “The recovery was very fast. And there was a pent-up demand for machinery.” Demand was up 10% to 15% in 2021 and this was 6% to 10% higher than expected. In a survey of AEM members, 91% believe the market will continue to grow in similar fashion.

4. Inflation. “Prices for raw materials are increasing for a myriad of reasons, but most obviously because demand is so much higher than expected,” says Duyck. “At the same time, we are experiencing an expansionary monetary policy that’s increasing the money supply. That not only increases the price of components and equipment, but for construction it increases mortgage rates and loan costs. We’re seeing inflation rates that are the highest since the mid-1980s. For construction machinery manufacturing in 2021, inflation was about 4.6% for the whole year, but it got worse toward the end of the year. And in December year-over-year it was 9.7%.”

Missing production

Equipment and component production grew 5% to 10% in 2021, says Duyck.

“When we asked members how much they could have grown without supply-chain issues, a lot of them said 15% to 20%. For 2022, the same growth is expected. So this tells me there is a large chunk of production growth missing due to supply-chain issues.”

In addition to rising prices, all these issues are stretching out lead times. “On average the OEMs’ lead times have almost tripled since 2019, and that’s a trend that’s increasing,” says Duyck. “That’s gone from a three-month lead time for a piece of equipment all the way to eight and a half months.”

Tackling the challenge

So what are OEM and component manufacturers doing about all these problems? Duyck sees several developments:

- Increasing and improving communications throughout the supply chain for better supply-chain signaling.
- Increasing the supplier base — sourcing from a lot more areas and increasing the stock they have of parts and equipment inventories.
- On-boarding new suppliers faster and more efficiently.
- More investments in analytics up and down the supply chain.
- Bringing manufacturing back. Large increases in on-shoring and re-shoring manufacturing will take some of the global risks out of the supply chain.

(CON’T PG 10)

Tech, the unsung hero

Telematics is also playing a quiet but effective role in mitigating the impact of the supply chain crisis for end users and manufacturers.

Aggregated insights provided by machine intelligence improves equipment longevity and reduces unplanned downtime, says Duyck. Telematics data can also help end users decide more accurately if and when they need to buy more equipment or when they should rent. In similar fashion equipment dealers and OEMs can parse the data and spot trends in use before the trends become shortages or problems.





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New CDL Requirements Take Effect Monday and Could Cost You Up to \$8,500 and Weeks of Training



New federal requirements for a commercial driver's license (CDL) take hold Monday, and it could have a major impact on anything from hauling grain or livestock to picking up a piece of equipment that's more than 150 miles from your farm.

According to the [Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association \(ILFA\)](#), the new requirements could have a major impact on the movement of inputs. The Association says the new requirements mean an entry-level driver must successfully complete a prescribed program on theory and behind-the-wheel instruction provided by a school or other entity listed on [FMCSA's Training Provider Registry](#), all prior to taking the CDL test.

"No longer will be the days of obtaining a learner's permit, driving with a CDL holder for as little as a few hours and then taking the CDL road test," says ILFA. "This new process will become more detailed and will take more time than the previous CDL process." "For agriculture, it will really be the same impact as the transportation industry. If you need to obtain a CDL, it's more hoops to jump through. With the shortage of drivers already existing, adding in the new requirement will deter drivers from getting into transportation, further decreasing the pool of CDL drivers," says [Kelly Krapu, safety director for True North Compliance Services in West Fargo, N.D.](#), a company that helps trucking companies and drivers navigate rules and regulations on the road.

New CDL Requirements

Starting Monday, Feb. 7, anyone obtaining an entry level CDL, will be required to obtain a higher level of training. According to the new [ELDT regulations](#), the new training will be required for anyone:

- seeking a Class A or Class B CDL for the first time
- upgrading an existing Class B CDL to Class A CDL
- obtaining a first-time school bus (S), passenger (P) or hazardous materials (H) endorsement.

With the changes, to either obtain a Class B or A, or upgrade from a Class B to a Class A:

- Drivers will be required to obtain training (theory and behind-the wheel) PRIOR to taking the CDL knowledge test for a commercial learner's permit (CLP)
- Training must be provided by an entity or individual listed on the FMCSA's Training Provider Registry
- The State Driver Licensing Agency will be required to verify training has been completed before allowing the driver to proceed to the next step (this is done via electronic records uploaded by the trainer)
- If a new driver presents to the State Licensing Bureau without training, they will be turned away

Prior to Feb. 7, in order to get a CDL, applicants had to do the following:

- Obtain a medical certificate (if required for your operation there are some exemptions)
- Complete the CDL application and pay state fee
- Provide proof of identity
- Pass knowledge test
- Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) issued
- Use CLP in a commercial vehicle with another CDL holder until comfortable (minimum waiting time varies by state)
- Return to State Licensing Bureau for road test – pass the road test
- Issued a CDL (class of license depends on test taken and vehicle used)

According to Krapu, the changes will be costly, not only in terms of money but also time.

"These classes range from \$2,500 to \$8,500, depending on the trainer, and can take from 3 days to 20 days depending on the individuals experience," she says.

Krapu says farmers are exempt from CDL requirements as long as they stay within a 150-air-mile radius of their farm operation. However, there are some areas of which Krapu says farmers should take note.

"If a farmer who is located in Ellendale, N.D., wants to drive their one ton pick-up with a flat bed trailer to pick up a new tractor for their farm in Omaha, Neb., they would be subject to regulations because they are outside the 150 miles from their operation and all federal transportation regulations would then apply, including needing a CDL to go get the new tractor in Nebraska," says Krapu.

New CDL Requirements Could Cripple Truck Driving Industry

Krapu says as she helps drivers navigate the new regulations, she worries it's going to be yet another barrier for an [industry already facing a shortage of truck drivers nationwide](#).

"It is going to impact driver shortages at a time of critical supply issues and at a time where the transportation industry is already facing a large number of driver shortages," she says.

So, what happens if a driver doesn't follow the new regulations? Krapu says if you're outside the 150-mile radius, there are repercussions to consider.

"If the driver is operating outside the 150-air-mile 'safe zone' of the farm operation, law enforcement will request valid CDL and the truck/driver will put out-of-service until a qualified driver can come drive the truck to its destination," she says. ●

PENNSYLVANIA LICA IS COMMITTED TO KEEPING OUR MEMBERS UP TO DATE ON REGULATIONS THAT AFFECT YOU TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY. AT THE WINTER CONFERENCE EARLIER THIS MONTH, MANY OF THESE TYPES OF THINGS WERE PRESENTED TO THOSE IN ATTENDANCE, IN INDOOR AND OUTDOOR SETTINGS, WITH THE OPPORTUNITY TO ASK MORE QUESTIONS. *CONSIDER TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ATTEND NEXT FEBRUARY 23-25 AT TOFTREES GOLF RESORT IN STATE COLLEGE.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2022

PennDOT Eliminates Truck Weight Class Stickers

Harrisburg, PA –The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) today announced that in a continuing focus on modernization and streamlining processes as well as an added convenience to customers the use of weight class stickers has been eliminated, effective January 29, 2022.

"Historically, trucks with a registered weight of 5,001 pounds or greater were required to display a truck weight class sticker on the inside of their vehicles windshield," PennDOT Secretary Yassmin Gramian said. "This was an antiquated and unreliable indicator for law enforcement and inconvenient for the industry/vehicle owners. The reliable way to determine the vehicle's registered weight is for the law enforcement officer to review the current registration card."

A vehicle's weight classification is printed on the vehicle's registration card carried within a vehicle and produced during a vehicle stop. Eliminating weight class stickers will have no bearing on revenue as application fees are collected in accordance with established fee schedules.

PennDOT published its intent to eliminate weight class stickers in the Pennsylvania Bulletin in May of 2020.

"Elimination of weight class stickers is a win-win for PennDOT and the trucking industry, saving costs and cutting needless red tape," Rebecca Oyler, Pennsylvania Motor Truck Association (PMTA) President and CEO said. "PMTA has long supported this change and is pleased with this final rulemaking, which will benefit the owners of an estimated 1.6 million commercial and non-commercial vehicles."

All motor vehicle forms and publications related to weight class stickers are being updated to remove the reference of a "weight class sticker." The updated forms will be available on our website at www.dmv.pa.gov.

More information can be found on PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Service website under the [Elimination of Truck Weight Class Stickers](#) page.

Customers may still obtain a variety of driver and vehicle products and services, including all forms, publications and driver training manuals, online through PennDOT's Driver and Vehicle Services website, www.dmv.pa.gov.

Follow PennDOT on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/PennDOTNews](https://twitter.com/PennDOTNews) and like the department on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PennsylvaniaDepartmentofTransportation and Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/pennsylvaniadot/>.

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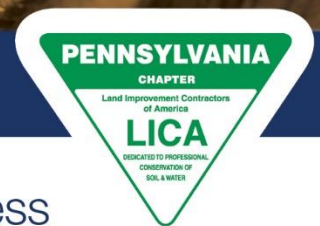


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Market Snapshot: Why Is It So Hard to Find Workers Right Now?

Employers across the country are facing a pronounced issue right now: too many open positions and not enough workers.

On its face, it might seem like there are not enough workers available for jobs—hence all the openings. But, confoundingly, that's not the case. The unemployment rate is still hovering just below 5%, translating to around 7.5 million unemployed Americans, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Additionally, several key COVID-19 initiatives ended at the end of summer—expanded unemployment benefits ceased, and children returned to in-person classes. As such, many economists expected workers to be spurred back into the workforce this fall. That's decidedly not been the case; while some individuals are returning to work, others are quitting in record numbers.

This article explores the current labor market, offering potential reasons why individuals have been slow to return to work despite available positions and suggesting ways for employers to attract some of these workers.

Factors Impacting Labor Shortage

The current labor shortage is an interesting situation. On the one hand, there technically isn't a shortage of labor, given the nearly 8 million currently unemployed workers. On the other hand, there are countless workplace openings that haven't been filled. In that sense, there is certainly a labor

shortage. This section hones in on potential contributing factors, many of which stem from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fear of Contracting COVID-19

One obvious reason for the labor situation may be COVID-19-related fears. Some workers are simply afraid of contracting a serious case of COVID-19 at work. To some, remaining unemployed longer outweighs the risks of taking an in-person job. However, as more Americans get vaccinated, this may become less of a concern.

Comfortable Savings

During the pandemic, much of the country was in some sort of lockdown, with restrictions put on travel, gatherings and business operations. In effect, many activities people enjoyed were suspended for nearly a year. That meant all the money that someone might spend on eating out, going to the movies or attending concerts all went into personal savings. Plus, individuals received generous stimulus checks and had access to enhanced unemployment benefits during this time, which also contributed to savings.

Now, some workers are relying on those accrued savings to remain out of the workforce. Essentially, they are using their assets to hold out for a desirable job. Under normal circumstances, these people may have taken the first available position. But, with a savings safety net, they are able to wait longer.



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Reprioritized Worker Desires

The COVID-19 pandemic caused workers to reevaluate their priorities, contributing to the labor shortage. Suddenly, workers began to rethink their priorities and the value of their labor. As the pandemic endured, a common thought was, “Is this job worth my mental and physical health?” Now, even as employees who were laid off are offered their previous positions, the answer among many has been a resounding, “No.”

Paired with accrued savings, workers are now able to be more discerning with the jobs they accept. As such, a significant number have chosen to quit their current jobs while they search for more fulfilling options.

According to several surveys, employees are looking for the following advantages when job hunting:

- Scheduling flexibility and/or telework options
- Access to employee benefits
- Greater compensation
- Job fulfillment

Continued Caregiving Duties

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the labor market through child care issues. While many schools have returned to in-person learning, some have not. On top of that, some day care facility rates have shot up due to staffing shortages and an influx of parents seeking child care.

For some parents, the costs of day care or the risks of in-person learning are too great. It may be more cost-effective to remain an at-home caregiver a bit longer instead of returning to the workforce right now.

Potential Employer Solutions

Cumulatively, the factors contributing to the current labor shortage amount to more leverage for workers. Some workers realize that employers are desperately trying to fill positions. In turn, those workers are leveraging their labor to obtain positions they value more—holding out for the right offer.

So, employers need to do what they can to make their open positions and workplaces ones that employees desire. Doing

any less may severely impact both employee attraction and retention. That means implementing some of the aspects employees say they want, including the following:

Scheduling and Work Location Flexibility

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many workplaces that were able to stay operational went remote. This meant sending most employees to work from home. Now that workplaces are reopening, many of those employees do not wish to return to in-person work.

Instead, formerly remote employees want to retain their status. This leaves employers with a couple of options: allow telework for some positions or introduce a hybrid schedule (i.e., require some in-person days, allowing telework the rest of the week).

In addition to helping cater to employee desires, telework also expands candidate pools, adding another incentive for employers. When a position can be done from anywhere, an employer doesn’t need to restrict hiring to a specific geographical region. It also enables employers to retain workers who may be interested in moving outside of a workplace’s region.

Benefits Access

Employee benefits are coveted assets in any workplace. Even narrow packages that just include health care can be supremely valuable among employees. They are valued even more by workers without access to them, such as part-time or service sector employees.

In fact, access to employee benefits, or a lack thereof, is one of the reasons some workers have held off on returning to former positions. After living through a pandemic, it’s not hard to imagine why individuals aren’t eager to seek in-person jobs that don’t offer health care.

Employers can consider how employee benefits packages might appeal to the kinds of workers they need. This could mean potentially expanding benefits options to some employees, such as part-time workers. Or, if an employer doesn’t offer any benefits, it might be worthwhile to consider adding some. Doing so could make a difference when trying to fill open positions or retain top talent.

Greater Compensation

Compensation is often brought up when asking employees what motivates them for obvious reasons. Simply put, individuals will likely respond to pay increases. If an employer has the budget for it, they can consider upping pay rates to attract workers or retain top performers.

Alternatively, employers can think about other means of compensation—basically, perks or value-adds that increase the worth of a position. Examples of such perks include:

- Generous time off
- Bonuses for meeting productivity goals
- Periodic catered lunches
- Company-sponsored team outings
- Free beverages or snacks in the workplace

Ultimately, employers should look for opportunities to demonstrate that they value their workers. Increasing compensation through the above means or otherwise can go a long way to showing that appreciation.

Job Fulfillment

Another attraction and retention strategy is improving worker perceptions about job fulfillment. Essentially, employers need to help employees answer the question, “Why is this job important?”

The answer to that question will depend on the workplace and position, but there are some general ways employers can help in this regard. Namely, employers can directly address the matter in job descriptions by explaining how the position helps customers or a larger goal.

Employers can also consider launching a branding campaign to help tell an important story. This could mean updating brand messaging, promoting certain initiatives or taking action on social issues. Summarily, such efforts help illustrate the values of a workplace. And when presented with a number of similar employers, workers are likely to decide where they want to work based on which company shares their values.

Employer Takeaways

The current labor shortage is due to several overlapping factors, many stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it's not a traditional labor shortage in that there are still many unemployed individuals. The real crux seems to be that workers are leveraging the moment to obtain better jobs.

It's unclear how long workers will remain selective with their labor. Realistically, savings only last so long and, with ample vaccine availability, the pandemic may be under control soon. Workers may be compelled back into the workforce sooner rather than later.

Yet, this may not be the case—the labor shortage might last months longer than anticipated. Therefore, it's in employers' best interest to listen to the desires of unemployed workers, such as flexibility and benefits. Understanding these drivers will be critical to attraction and retention efforts.

At the end of the day, if an employer turns a deaf ear on what employees are looking for, they may be limiting the applicants they receive—both in terms of quality and quantity. In turn, this can severely impact an organization's ability to grow and succeed.

Reach out to Prins Insurance, Inc. for more attraction and retention guidance.



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PLAYING IT SAFE



Purging Propane Tanks Safely

Helpful tips for reducing your risk of propane hazards

Propane cylinders must be purged before filling in order to force any air or water out of the cylinders. Air and water are considered contaminants and can interfere with proper cylinder operation. Purging helps equipment to operate properly and also keeps customers safe.

There are two scenarios when propane cylinders, or tanks, need to be purged:

- A new cylinder hasn't been vacuum-purged by the manufacturer.
- A cylinder has been opened and exposed to the atmosphere.

Never purge a cylinder with liquid propane. This can cause the liquid to flash into vapor, the cylinder to chill and any moisture vapor in the walls to condense. Using propane vapor to purge cylinders is more effective. Here are four steps for purging propane tanks safely:

1. **Connect the vapor hose to the cylinder you want to purge.** Make sure you have the correct fittings installed when connecting them. If the valve does not have a female Prest-O-Lite (POL) opening, attach a cylinder service valve adapter to the POL adapter of the vapor line hose end valve. Tighten the vapor hose assembly to the cylinder service valve.
2. **Pressurize the cylinder to 15 pounds per square inch gauge (psig) with**
3. **propane vapor.** With the service valve closed on the cylinder you're purging, open the service valve on the purging cylinder. Slowly position the ball valve on the vapor hose. If you do not detect any leakage, open the service valve on the cylinder being purged. Watch the gauge on the purging manifold until the pressure reaches 15 psig.
3. **Bleed the pressure in the cylinder.** When the pressure gauge is at 15 psig, slowly position the ball valve on the vapor hose to vent a small volume of propane vapor and air until the pressure gauge is at 0 psig. To prevent ignition, vent at least 25 feet from any open flames, smoking areas, portable electric tools and extension lights. Vent at least 35 feet away from any metal cutting, grinding, oxygen-fuel gas cutting, brazing, soldering or welding.
4. **Repeat the purging process.** To be sure you have purged 97 percent of the air from the cylinder, pressurize and bleed off the pressure in the cylinder at least four more times. Leave the vapor return hose connected until the final purge. Then re-pressurize the cylinder to 15 psig. Close the service valve on both the purging cylinder and the cylinder being purged and check for any leakage on the cylinder being purged.

Be safe and healthy on the job at **Pennsylvania LICA** with these helpful tips provided by **Prins Insurance, Inc.**

"Propane is nontoxic, but its vapor is dangerous to inhale, making it dangerous in confined spaces."

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(724) 681-4414

joe@greco.tc

