ALABAMA UTILITY CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

TIM AYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
DECEMBER 2025

Director's Comments:

As the year draws to a close, so does my time serving the Alabama Utility Contractors Association. As I shared with the AUCA Board of Directors at our December Board meeting, I will be stepping down to begin a new professional chapter with the Alabama Concrete Industries Association.

This decision is certainly bittersweet, but I believe it represents a win-win. It allows me to return closer to my professional roots (or perhaps more fittingly, my *foundation*), while also creating an opportunity for AUCA to bring in fresh leadership and continue building on its positive momentum.

Serving AUCA since 2014 has been one of the greatest honors of my career. I am sincerely grateful for the support, collaboration, and trust shown to me by our members, Board of Directors, and industry partners throughout the years. Together, we have strengthened the association, advanced important initiatives, and reinforced AUCA's role as a strong and influential voice for Alabama's Utility Contracting Community.

To ensure a smooth transition, the AUCA Board has established a Transition Committee that will begin developing the process for identifying and onboarding the next Executive Director. While I will no longer serve in this role, I am committed to supporting this effort and helping maintain continuity in the months ahead.

Thank you for the privilege of serving this outstanding organization. I look forward to staying connected and continuing to support the industry in new ways. AUCA is well-positioned for continued success, and I am confident the association will remain strong through this transition and well into the future.

I wish you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year!

Tim

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

Inside This Issue:

News & Notes	2-7
Upcoming Meetings & Events	8-12
CWCC Report	13-15
Health & Safety	16-19

News & Notes:

AUCA Leadership Transition Announcement:

At the December 4, 2025 meeting of the AUCA Board of Directors in Montgomery, Executive Director Tim Ayers formally notified the Board of his decision to step down from his position at the end of the year to pursue a new professional opportunity with the Alabama Concrete Industries Association. Director Ayers began his service with AUCA in July 2014 as Associate Director and assumed the role of Executive Director in January 2015 following the retirement of Philip Lee. During more than a decade of service to the Association, he has played a key role in advancing AUCA's mission and strengthening its presence within the industry.

In preparation for this planned leadership transition, the AUCA Board of Directors has established a Transition Committee charged with developing and overseeing a structured process for the identification and onboarding of AUCA's next Executive Director. To help ensure continuity and organizational stability, Director Ayers has committed to supporting the Transition Committee and remaining actively engaged throughout the transition period.

The Transition Committee will be comprised of the following AUCA members:

- Robbie Butler — Cleary Construction
- Alex Blankenship — Blankenship Contracting
- Charles Smith — Vulcan Materials Company
- Ryan McClendon — Marsh McLennan Agency
- Larry Logsdon — Wallace Jordan Ratliff & Brandt

Additional updates will be provided to the membership as the transition process progresses.

2026 AUCA Membership Dues Renewal:

AUCA 2026 Membership Dues Notices will be distributed soon, so please be on the lookout in the coming weeks. We sincerely appreciate your continued support of the Alabama Utility Contractors Association and hope your company will renew its membership as we move into 2026.

To avoid any disruption in member benefits, we kindly ask that dues be returned promptly upon receipt of your notice. Your ongoing participation and support are vital as AUCA continues its mission to serve and advocate for Alabama's utility construction industry during this period of leadership transition and beyond.

News & Notes:

ADOW Launches Updated New Hire Portal:

The Alabama Department of Workforce (ADOW) announced the launch of a new and improved application for reporting new hires. While many features of the current system will remain the same, the new application includes several enhancements designed to streamline the reporting process and improve usability.

These changes will be effective December 4, 2025.

All Alabama employers MUST report all new hires to the state within seven days to remain in compliance with state law.

The portal can be found at:

https://labor.alabama.gov/NewHire

Important Information for Employers:

- All Alabama employers will be required to register in the new system.
- To register, an employer will need the following information:
  - Their Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)
  - Their Alabama Employer Account Number (EAN)
- During registration, the user will be prompted to enter a valid email address. A one-time password (OTP) will be sent to this email, which must be entered into the application for identity verification and to complete the login process.
- The user will have the option to add up to five additional filers who can manually enter or upload new hire records for the associated FEIN.
- The application will support the following file formats for uploading new hire records:
  - Comma Delimited (.CSV)
  - Tab Delimited (.TXT)

Any questions should be directed to the ADOW New Hire Unit at Newhire@workforce.alabama.gov or call (334) 206-6020.

2026 Alabama Legislative Session:

The 2026 Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature will convene in Montgomery on January 13, 2026, marking the final year of the current four-year legislative cycle. Although the agenda is expected to be full, the session will likely move quickly as lawmakers work to complete their business early and turn their attention to the upcoming election campaigns.

News & Notes:

AUCA 2026 Calendars:

AUCA has a limited number of 2026 calendars remaining. If you would like one, please contact the AUCA office, and we will arrange delivery while supplies last.

Contractor's Group Retirement Planning:

BenSource Employee Benefits, an AUCA member company, is staffed to take your call with any questions you may have about starting a retirement plan, or to compare your current plan with the ***Contractor's Retirement Plan***. BenSource can be reached at (205) 536-9204.

Here are just few of the unique benefits of this plan:

- Eliminates all TPA costs, all audit costs, 5500 costs and document costs
- Greatly reduces employee investment costs - the *power* of group buying
- Eliminates nearly all of the HR tasks typically associated with 401k
- Diverts the significant fiduciary liability away from the business owner

Grants Available Now

Let CICT Help Fund Your Craft Training Program

If you currently offer or would like to provide craft training within the commercial construction industry, you're eligible to apply for grants from the **Alabama Construction Industry Craft Training** (CICT) Board. These grants include funding for contractors' in-house training programs. In the fiscal year 2023, CICT awarded over $5 million, which helped fund training for more than 4,000 students across 93 training programs.

Types of Grants:

CICT grants are reimbursable grants and applications may be submitted at any time.

1. Craft/Apprenticeship Training Grant
- Up to $100,000 per trade.
- Skills/craft tied to a specific trade.

2. Task Grant
- Up to $15,000.
- Short-term/seminar-type training.

Eligible Training Providers:

- Alabama commercial construction business, for-profit and not-for-profit.
- 2-year and 4-year accredited postsecondary institution recognized by SACS.
- K-12 education entity recognized by the Alabama State Department of Education.
- Trade union.
- Other related entities approved by the board.

GO BUILD + ALABAMA CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY CRAFT TRAINING

Go Build Alabama connects training programs awarded by CICT to career-seekers interested in the skilled trades. Together, Go Build Alabama and CICT can help build a qualified workforce that meets Alabama's growing demand for skilled construction workers.

Apply for funding now at alcict.com

The mission of the Alabama Construction Recruitment Institute and the Go Build Alabama campaign is to recruit a new generation of skilled tradespeople for the commercial and industrial construction industry, by creating a recruitment campaign that dispels the misperceptions about working in the trades, promotes training programs, and enhances the image of the construction trade professional and the industry as a whole.

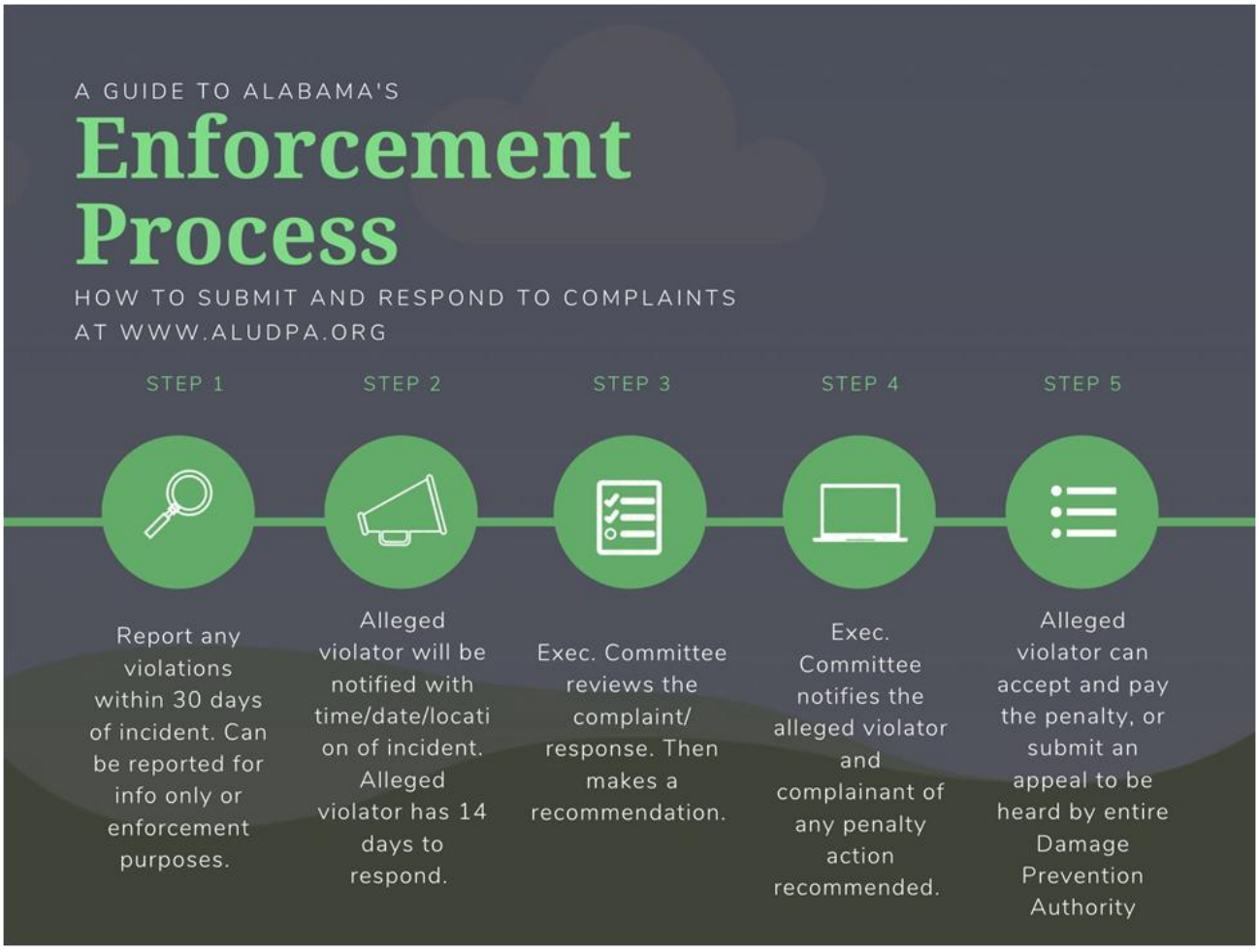
News & Notes:

Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA)

The Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Authority (ALUDPA) was established for the purpose of enforcing the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law, for reviewing penalty provisions, and for reviewing the adequacy of the Alabama State Law Enforcement Program.

The Enforcement Program is a complaint-driven process where a complaint may be submitted against an entity for violation of the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention State Law. A complaint may be submitted as information only and not designated for enforcement penalties.

A complaint may be submitted using the Complaint Form at this Website no later than 30 days after the occurrence of an alleged violation. The submitted Complaint Form is reviewed by the ALUDPA for determination of an alleged violation and for penalty provisions that may apply. The reported violator is then notified by the ALUDPA that a response may be submitted using the Response Form at this Website no later than 14 days after the ALUDPA notification.



News & Notes:

STATE OF ALABAMA
Department of Finance
Office of the Director
State Capitol, Suite N-200
Montgomery, Alabama 36130
Telephone (334) 242-7160 Fax (334) 353-3300
www.finance.alabama.gov

Kay Ivey
Governor

Bill Poole
Director of Finance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2025

Contact: Ethan Girona
ethan.girona@finance.alabama.gov

State of Alabama Launches Centralized Website for Public Works Bid Advertisements

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – The Alabama Department of Finance's Division of Real Property Management today announced the launch of a new centralized website – https://alabamabuilds.gov – designed to modernize the way sealed bid opportunities for public works projects are posted and accessed.

The new platform, established under ACT 2025-383, provides a single, electronic location for Awarding Authorities to post official Notices of Advertisement for sealed bids, effective October 1, 2025. While the statutory requirement to advertise in newspapers remains in place when available, this digital resource makes it easier for contractors, architects, engineers, and the general public to stay informed.

"This centralized system will streamline the procurement process, provide consistent access to information, and ensure compliance with Alabama's Public Works law," said **Mickey Allen**, Assistant Finance Director, RPM. "By increasing visibility of advertisements, we expect more competition among qualified contractors, which will drive lower bids and ultimately reduce costs for public works projects."

Key features of the website include:

- **Daily Updates:** Anyone may sign up to receive email notifications of new bid postings added within the previous 24 hours.
- **Low-Cost Access:** Awarding Authorities may publish advertisements for a $25 posting fee.
- **Future Enhancements:** The site will soon expand to include bid results and project completion notices, further enhancing public accountability.

"This is an important step forward for transparency and efficiency in state government," said Finance Director **Bill Poole**. "By centralizing bid postings in one public location, we are ensuring equal access to information, reducing administrative burdens, and providing taxpayers with a clearer view of how their dollars are being invested in infrastructure and public facilities."

For more information, visit https://alabamabuilds.gov or contact the Division of Construction Management at (334) 242-4082 or alabamabuilds@rpm.alabama.gov.

###

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

AUCA 2026 Board of Directors Meetings

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Thursday, June 4, 2026

Thursday, September 10, 2026

Thursday, December 3, 2026

AUCA 2026 Spring General Meeting, Golf Tournament and Shrimp & Crawfish Boil

Thursday, April 23, 2026
Arrowhead Country Club
Montgomery, AL

AUCA 2026 Fall General Meeting & Sporting Clay Shoot

Thursday, October 15, 2026
Lower Wetumpka Shotgun Sports Club
Montgomery, AL

AUCA Industry Lunch Meetings

2026 Dates and Locations To Be Announced

P.I.P.E.
Pipe Installation Practices Education

AGENDA

Contractor & Inspector Training

Monday, January 12th, Mobile I Wednesday, January 14th, Montgomery
Tuesday February 3rd, Madison (Huntsville Area) |
Tuesday Feb. 17th, Tuscaloosa | & Wednesday February 18th, Irondale (Birmingham Area)
8:30AM - 1:30PM

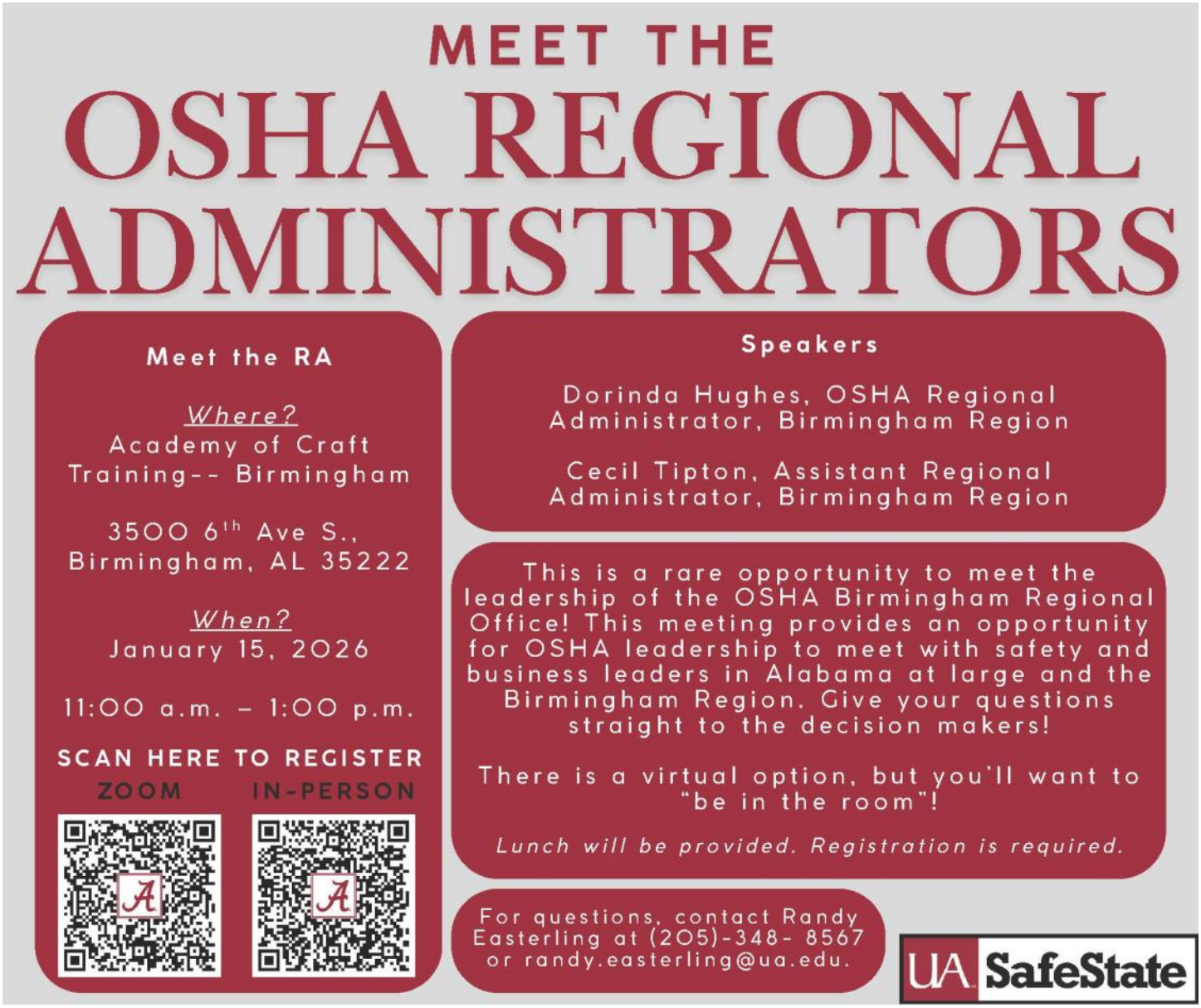
Light breakfast & lunch will be provided. *Speakers Al Hogan, P.E. – ACPA & Mike Kusch – Foley Products & Others TBA*

SIGN-IN & INTRODUCTIONS	**8:30am – 9:00am**
Sign-In and Light Breakfast	8:30am – 8:45am
Introductions	8:45am – 9:00am
SECTION 1: PIPE SYSTEM FUNDAMENTALS	**9:00am – 9:45am**
1.1 Introduction and Worker Safety	
1.2 RCP Pipe Basics and Strength	
1.3 Soils Basics & Compaction	
1.4 Standard Installations & Summary	
Hands-on Exercise	
SECTION 2: DELIVERY & PRE-INSTALLATION PREPARATION	**9:45am – 10:30am**
2.1 Pre-Installation Inspection - Part 1	
2.2 Pre-Installation Inspection -Part 2	
2.3 Handling & Storage	
Hands-on Exercise	
Test Section 1& 2 & Break	10:30am– 10:45am
SECTION 3: INSTALLATION - PART 1	**10:45pm – 11:30am**
3.1 Trench Excavation	
3.2 Foundation	
3.3 Bedding	
3.4 Laying Pipe	
Hands-on Exercise	
Lunch break (LUNCH PROVIVED BY RCP PRODUCERS)	11:30am – 11:45pm
SECTION 3: INSTALLATION - PART 2	**11:45pm – 12:30pm**
3.5 Joining Pipe Sections	
3.6 Connections to Structures	
3.7 Structural Backfill	
3.8 Final Backfill	
SECTION 4: CSI - POST INSTALLATION	**12:30pm – 1:15pm**
4.1 Introduction to Post-Installation Inspection (PII)	
4.2 RCP Forensics Hands-on Exercise/Discussion	
SECTION 4: Section 3.1, 3.2 & 4 Test, - Closing Comments	**1:15pm – 1:30pm**

Electives & Other Resources:

- 1.5 Plastic and Metal Pipe Material Basics
- 1.6 Pipe Soils System Fundamentals
- 2.4 Plan Reading
- 2.5 Site Preparation
- 4.3 PII Forensics Metal and Plastic Pipe
- 4.4 Pipe Inspection Preparation
- 4.5 PII Evaluation Criteria
- 4.6 Remediation

Upcoming Meetings & Events:



Upcoming Meetings & Events:

1st Quarter Alabama 811 Hosted Area Damage Prevention Meetings

Know what's below.
Contact 811 before you dig.

Alabama 811 invites you to join the 2026 Damage Prevention meeting series:
Clearing Up Confusion: A Topical Breakdown of the Alabama Underground Damage Prevention Act

*Alabama 811 is excited to announce that ADEM (Alabama Department Environmental Management) has approved these courses to count for one credit hour for water and wastewater operators!

The quarterly meeting series is designed for excavators, operators, locators, contractors, engineers, and public agencies. These one hour sessions provide a clear, practical overview of the Act, covering its purpose, key definitions, shared responsibilities, and real-world compliance requirements.

Each quarter focuses on a core area of the law—from safe excavation and One-Call notification procedures to emergency response, damage reporting, enforcement, and civil penalties. Participants will leave with a better understanding of how to comply with the Act, reduce risk, avoid penalties, and promote safer excavation and demolition practices across Alabama.

This January we will begin our first quarter series titled:

Underground Damage Prevention: Safe Excavation, Definitions, and Legal Responsibilities

Upon completion, participants will understand how to comply with legal requirements, reduce risk, avoid penalties, and promote safer excavation and demolition practices statewide.

Purpose and Safety Intent:
Prevent injury, loss of life, service interruptions, and damage to underground facilities during excavation, demolition, and blasting activities.

Key Definitions and Roles:
Understanding critical terms such as excavation, demolition, operator, One-Call Notification System, tolerance zone, marking, and emergency excavation.

Legal Prohibitions and Compliance:
Requirements to locate underground facilities before work begins and the responsibilities of excavators to comply with notification and response procedures.

Your participation is vital. Don't miss the chance to be part of the solution, strengthen professional relationships, and make a real impact on damage prevention in your community. Let's work together to keep our infrastructure safe and our projects successful!

**Meal sponsorships are optional but welcome. Contact Alabama 811 if interested.

Upcoming Meetings & Events:

See the Area Meeting Details and Registration Below:

Auburn Area
January 14, 2026 @ 11:00 am
Hubert & Grace Harris Center

425 Perry St, Auburn AL 36830

Mobile Area
January 20, 2026 @ 8:30 am
Mobile Area Water and Sewer System

4725 H. Moffett Rd, Mobile AL 36618
(MAWSS will provide breakfast)

Tuscaloosa County Area
January 20, 2026 @ 8:30 am
Hilliard Fletcher Resource Recovery

4010 Reese Phifer Ave, Tuscaloosa AL 5401

Dothan Area
January 21, 2026 @ 12:00 pm
Southeast Gas in Dothan

2390 Ross Clark Cir, Dothan AL 36301
(Southeast Gas will provide lunch)

Baldwin County
January 22, 2026 @ 8:30 am
Riviera Utilities

413 E. Laurel Ave, Foley AL 36535

Madison, Limestone & Morgan Counties
January 28, 2026 @ 11:00 am
North Alabama Gas

217 Palmer Rd, Madison AL 35758

Montgomery Area
January 28, 2026 @ 11:00 am
Spire

2951 Chestnut St, Montgomery AL 36107
(Spire will provide lunch)

Shelby County
January 29, 2026 @ 11:00 am
Alabaster Water

200 Kent Stone Blvd, Alabaster AL 35007

Jefferson County
January 29, 2026 @ 8:30 am
Fultondale Event Center

2980 Hawkins Ln, Fultondale AL 35068

*ADEM has approved these courses to count for one credit hour for water and wastewater operators, and a certificate will be issued. Alabama 811 will maintain records of credit hours, but will not be responsible for submitting those hours to the appropriate agencies.

RSVP by Clicking the Link: Alabama 811 Area Damage Prevention Meetings

or Scanning the QR Code

Clean Water Construction Coalition Report:

From Kyle England - Chairman CWCC & Ted Mondloch - Current Strategies

December 2025 Report

Appropriations Developments and January Funding Deadline

Members of Congress have left DC for the holidays without passing any of the nine remaining appropriations bills for fiscal year 2026. Among these nine measures is the Interior-Environment bill, which provides funding for EPA water infrastructure programs. Upon their return in the first week of January, lawmakers will be up against the clock to negotiate and pass these bills ahead of the January 30 funding deadline to avoid another government shutdown.

Before breaking for the holidays, Senate Appropriators indicated that they were close to moving a five-bill minibus package that included the EPA funding measure. They ultimately balked on releasing the bill and holding votes before the end of the year, but we can expect that negotiations will pick up immediately in early January.

Current and CWCC are continuing to advocate for increased funding levels to our core programs. In mid-December, we re-shared CWCC's FY26 appropriations letter with all appropriations committee members. We are also coordinating directly with appropriations committee staff to urge that the 24% funding cuts proposed in the House's bill from this summer are not included in final legislation. We are also working between the lines to thwart a late-breaking effort from Senate appropriators to divert 8% of lead service line replacement funds for other purposes.

We will continue to keep the coalition apprised of developments related to the FY26 bills, as well as any updates on the potential for a full-year continuing resolution (CR) or another government shutdown.

Release of FY25 Lead Service Line Replacement Funding

In late November, EPA announced the release of the long-delayed FY25 Lead Service Line Replacement (LSLR) funding, totaling $3 billion nationally. This funding was on hold earlier in the year as EPA finalized its updated state allotment formulas and addressed implementation questions related to prior-year funding.

In addition to releasing the FY25 funds, EPA also announced that it would be reallocating past years' funding that went unobligated in certain states. More specific information about how this reallotment will be carried out will be available in the coming months, and Current will provided an update on which states will see increased funding for this purpose as we learn more.

Status of EPA Water Program Renewal Efforts

Congressional activity continues around legislation to renew EPA water infrastructure programs that

(Continued on page 14)

Clean Water Construction Coalition Report:

(Continued from page 13)

are set to expire after FY26. The programs covered under this legislation will include the State Revolving Funds (SRFs), WIFIA, and several other small grant programs that support drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater investments. This will be the first bill to set authorized funding levels for these programs since the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021.

Three congressional committees have jurisdiction over this legislation – the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (wastewater/stormwater), House Energy and Commerce Committee (drinking water), and Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (all water issues). Current is regularly engaging with these committees and their member offices to gather the latest information on the development of this bill.

CWCC recently finalized and circulated a letter outlining priorities for EPA water program renewals. The letter is attached alongside this update, and we encourage all coalition members to share it with their own state congressional delegation offices now or in January.

CWCC is also participating in broader coalition efforts with national water sector organizations, including endorsing a sign-on letter to congressional committees urging them to increase authorized funding levels for water programs. This same coalition also held a December 10 congressional staff briefing that Current and CWCC helped to plan.

Federal PFAS Activity and Defense Authorization Developments

While no major EPA drinking water regulations were finalized in December, federal activity related to PFAS contamination continues to evolve.

Earlier this year, EPA announced that it will be maintaining maximum contaminant levels for PFOA and PFOS, while reconsidering compliance timelines for these contaminants, and rescinding regulations for four additional PFAS compounds. A rulemaking to formalize these changes will be proposed and opened for public comment in the early months of 2026.

On Thursday, December 18, the House Energy and Commerce Committee held a hearing on the impacts of EPA designating PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The hearing's panel of witnesses included representatives from water utility associations and related organizations. In the hearing, Republican members generally advocated for a CERCLA exemption for "passive receivers" of PFAS contamination such as water utilities, while Democrats pushed back and opposed opening up CERCLA to industry-specific exemptions.

On Wednesday, December 17, Congress also passed a bipartisan compromise version of the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). While primarily focused on defense policy, the bill in-

(Continued on page 15)

Clean Water Construction Coalition Report:

(Continued from page 14)

cludes provisions related to PFAS contamination associated with military installations. These provisions expand testing and reporting requirements and include limited measures related to providing alternative drinking water supplies for affected households. While not a direct source of infrastructure funding, these provisions reflect continued federal attention to PFAS-related drinking water challenges.

Water Week 2026

Planning continues for CWCC participation during Water Week 2026, scheduled for the week of April 13, 2026.

cleanwaterconstructioncoalition.org

Health & Safety:

Provided by Marsh McLennan Agency - Southeast Risk Control Services

Prepare Vehicles for Winter Weather Driving

The winter season comes with holiday cheer and travel to be with family and friends. Whether it's fog, snow, sleet or ice, winter weather can cause extremely dangerous road conditions. Along with shorter daytime hours, drivers spend more time navigating in low-visibility conditions. Below are ways to prepare for winter weather travel:

Precautions to Prevent Vehicle Breakdowns

- Test your battery, battery power drops as the temperature drops
- Make sure the cooling system is in good working order
- Have winter tires with a deeper, more flexible tread put on your car
- If using all-season tires, check the tread and replace if less than 2/32 of an inch
- Check the tire pressure, which drops as the temperature drops
- Check your wiper blades and replace them if needed
- Add wiper fluid rated at -30 degrees Fahrenheit
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas lines freeze

Emergency Supplies

- Extra layers of clothing, extra socks, warm gloves, winter hats etc.
- Blankets and candles in a jar and matches/lighter
- High-visibility vest or rain jacket
- Nonperishable food items & water bottles
- First aid kit
- Portable power bank/cellphone charger
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Windshield washer fluid
- Bag of sand, rock salt or kitty litter to help with tire traction
- Shovel, Snow scraper and brush
- Tire chains
- Jumper cables or jumpstart charging system
- Extra flares and reflective triangles

https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/seasonal-safety/winter-safety/driving?srsltid=AfmBOoqjbJ3VfFZxxj65kKyY9MCMiX7U1kp0yjmXkV6QAfY5MeojUO4b
https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/27539-ready-for-winter-driving

PROTECT WORKERS IN TRENCHES

Prevent trench collapses and save lives:

SLOPE or bench trench walls,

SHORE trench walls with supports, or

SHIELD trench walls with trench boxes

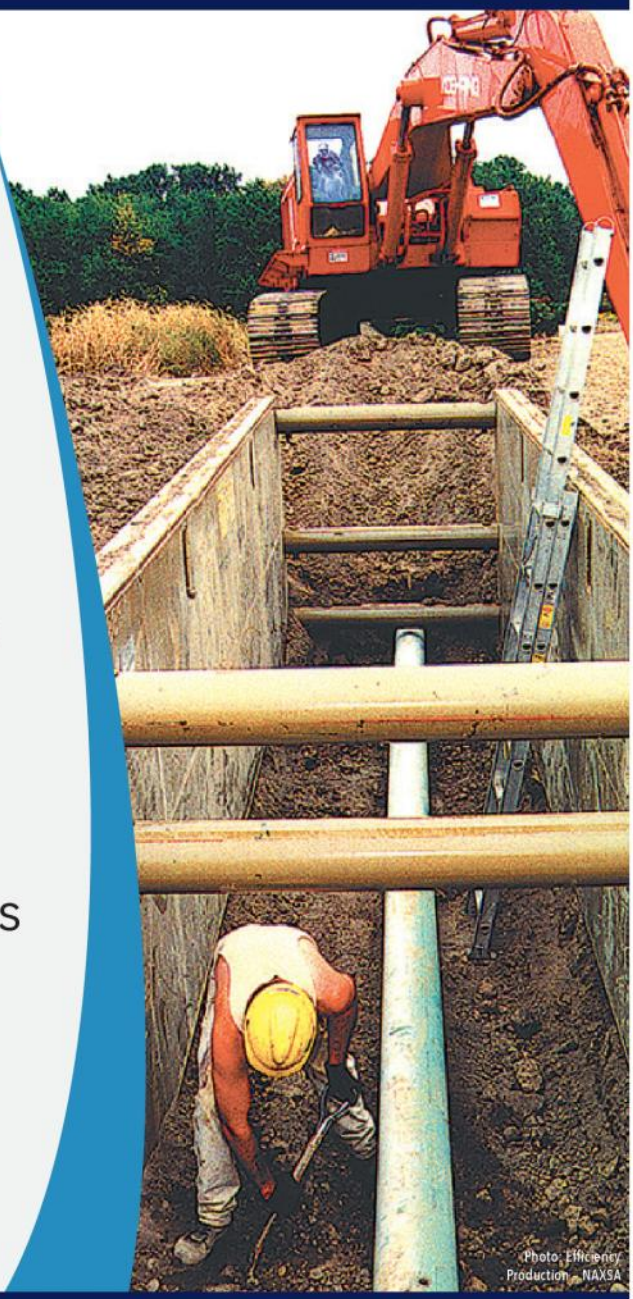


Photo: Efficiency Production - NAXSA

U.S. Department of Labor

OSHA
Occupational Safety and Health Administration

WWW.OSHA.GOV/TRENCHING • 800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 877-889-5627

OSHA 3215-06R 2018

OSHA FactSheet

Confined Spaces in Construction: Sewer Systems

Confined spaces can present conditions that are immediately dangerous to workers if such conditions are not properly identified, evaluated, tested, and controlled. This fact sheet highlights many of the confined space hazards associated with sewer systems and how employers can protect workers in these environments.

OSHA has developed a new construction standard for Confined Spaces (29 CFR 1926 Subpart AA)—any space that meets the following three criteria:

- Is large enough for a worker to enter it;
- Has limited means of entry or exit; and
- Is not designed for continuous occupancy.

A space may also be a **permit-required** confined space if it has a hazardous atmosphere, the potential for engulfment or suffocation, a layout that might trap a worker through converging walls or a sloped floor, or any other serious safety or health hazard.

Fatal Incidents

Confined space hazards in sewer systems have led to worker deaths. Several tragic incidents in sewers have included:

- A worker who lost consciousness and died when he climbed into a sewer vault to retrieve a tool. His co-worker also died when he attempted a rescue.
- While repairing a natural gas leak, a worker entered a drainage pipe to retrieve survey equipment. The natural gas ignited, killing the worker.

Training

The new Confined Spaces standard requires employers to ensure that their workers know about the existence, location, and dangers posed by each permit-required confined space, and that they may not enter such spaces without authorization.

Employers must train workers involved in permit-required confined space operations so that they can perform their duties safely and understand the hazards in permit spaces and the methods used to isolate, control or protect workers. Workers not authorized to perform entry rescues must be trained on the dangers of attempting such rescues.

Safe Entry Requirements

The new Confined Spaces standard includes several requirements for safe entry.

Preparation: Before workers can enter a confined space, employers must provide pre-entry planning. This includes:

- Having a competent person evaluate the work site for the presence of confined spaces, including permit-required confined spaces.
- Once the space is classified as a permit-required confined space, identifying the means of entry and exit, proper ventilation methods, and elimination or control of all potential hazards in the space.
- Ensuring that the air in a confined space is tested, before workers enter, for oxygen levels, flammable and toxic substances, and stratified atmospheres.
- If a permit is required for the space, removing or controlling hazards in the space and determining rescue procedures and necessary equipment.
- If the air in a space is not safe for workers, ventilating or using whatever controls or protections are necessary so that employees can safely work in the space.

Ongoing practices: After pre-entry planning, employers must ensure that the space is monitored for hazards, especially atmospheric hazards. Effective communication is important because there can be multiple contractors operating on a site, each with its own workers needing to enter the confined space. Attendants outside confined spaces must make sure that unauthorized workers do not enter them. Rescue attempts by untrained personnel can lead to multiple deaths.

Confined Spaces in Sewer Systems

Types of sewer systems include sanitary (domestic sewage), storm (runoff), and combined (domestic sewage and runoff). Sewer systems are extensive

and include many different components that are considered confined spaces, including pipelines, manholes, wet wells, dry well vaults, and lift/pump stations. Therefore, employers conducting work in sewer systems will likely have workers who will encounter confined spaces.

Sewer systems also consist of wastewater treatment plants, where confined spaces include digestion and sedimentation tanks, floating covers over tanks, sodium hypochlorite tanks, and wastewater holding tanks, among others. Many of these components may also qualify as permit-required confined spaces.

Employers must take all necessary steps to keep workers safe in confined spaces, including following the OSHA Construction Confined Spaces standard. This standard applies to both new construction within an existing sewer and alterations and/or upgrades. For example:

- Installing or upgrading a manhole.
- Altering or upgrading sewer lines.
- Making nonstructural upgrades to joints, pipes, or manholes.
- Demolition work.
- Installing new or upgraded pump equipment, cables, wires, or junction boxes.

Construction work can create confined spaces, even if there are none at the start of a project. Changes to the entry/exit, the ease of exit, and air flow could produce a confined space or cause one to become permit-required.

Hazards Associated with Sewer Systems

Sewer systems can present a host of confined space hazards, including:

- Atmospheric hazards (low oxygen, toxic or flammable gases).
- Chemicals in piping and from roadway runoff (may harm lungs, skin, or eyes).
- Engulfment and drowning.
- Electrocution (e.g., using electrical equipment in wet working conditions).
- Slips, trips, and falls.
- Falling objects.
- High noise levels, low visibility, limits to communication, and long distances to exits.

Personal protective equipment: Employers should assess the work site to determine what personal protective equipment (PPE) is needed to protect workers. Employers should provide workers with the required PPE and proper training on its use and about any related hazards before the work starts.

How to Contact OSHA

For questions or to get information or advice, to find out how to contact OSHA's free on-site consultation program, order publications, report a fatality or severe injury, or to file a confidential complaint, visit www.osha.gov or call 1-800-321-OSHA (6742).

Additional Information

OSHA's Confined Spaces in Construction standard (29 CFR 1926 Subpart AA)

Confined Spaces: OSHA Construction Industry Topics by Standard

OSHA Fact Sheet: Procedures for Atmospheric Testing in Confined Spaces

Confined Spaces: NIOSH Workplace Safety and Health Topics Page

State Plan Guidance: States with OSHA-approved state plans may have additional requirements for confined space safety.

Help for Small and Medium-Sized Employers: OSHA's On-site Consultation Program offers free and confidential advice to businesses nationwide.

This is one in a series of informational fact sheets highlighting OSHA programs, policies or standards. It does not impose any new compliance requirements. For a comprehensive list of compliance requirements of OSHA standards or regulations, refer to Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations. This information will be made available to sensory-impaired individuals upon request. The voice phone is (202) 693-1999; teletypewriter (TTY) number: 1-877-889-5627.

OSHA® Occupational Safety and Health Administration

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