



FROM THE PRESIDENT

NOVEMBER 2024



By Jennifer Blair
President
Dayton BOMA

As this year draws to a close, I'd like to thank everyone for their participation in our luncheons, the golf outing, trade show and donation drives. Our small but mighty group makes a huge difference in people's lives with our generosity in giving to The Foodbank, Toys for Tots and Empowering Children with Hope and Opportunity (ECHO).

Our Associates Trade Show held on October 8th was very successful. What a great opportunity for our Principal members to get a better understanding of what our Associate members have to offer. It was a great time for property managers and building engineers to network as well. Congratulations to the winners of the door prizes that were given out by Aegis Protective Services, Environment Control, and ServiceMaster by Angler.

Are you aware of all the benefits of being a BOMA member? Dayton BOMA offers several opportunities for members to attend luncheons and after-hours networking, education and volunteering annually. Not only do we have educational speakers at our luncheons, breakfast and learn events are also available. The Board works to find speakers that will not only help you in your workday but may also be helpful in your personal life.

BOMA is more than just networking and education with our local group. BOMA International offers networking opportunities with four national conferences, industry-leading educational

content including webinars and online learning. As a BOMA member you have access to comprehensive research, resources and articles to help you stay relevant and prepared in the commercial real estate industry. Your company can take advantage of discounts on supplies, shipping and merchant services through a variety of national partners.

Advocacy is another way you can be involved in the state and federal legislative, regulatory and codes agenda that affect our industry. Many of the Federal Acts that regulate commercial real estate have been influenced by BOMA advocacy. H.R. 2621, Honoring Vocational Education Act is strongly endorsed by BOMA International. This legislation would direct the US Census to recognize licenses, certifications and other postsecondary credentials. This is legislation that will make a large impact on the technicians that work in our buildings.

As we plan for 2025, the Board has made the difficult decision to raise membership dues next year. The increase is lower than last years, but the benefits are worth it. But what do my dues cover? Membership dues cover the cost of the fees that we must pay to International, programming and education, luncheons and professional and administrative fees. While some golf outing fees are going up as well, newsletter advertising rates will remain the same as they have been since 2018.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to either me or Nancy if you have any questions. If you have any suggestions for speakers, buildings to tour or maybe you're interested in hosting an after-hours event or breakfast and learn, please contact Nancy and she will find a place in our program.

I wish you all a happy holiday season and look forward to seeing you in January 2025!

UPCOMING SPEAKERS AND EVENTS

Reminder...Our membership luncheons are typically held on the second Tuesday of each month from 11:30 until 1:00.

If you'd like to recommend a future speaker or topic, please contact Nancy Ferrara by email (nancy@bomadayton.org) or give her a call at (937) 299-2662.

November 12th – We will be sorting toys for the Marine Corp League Toys for Tots program this month at their distribution site in Huber Heights. We'll be enjoying pizza for lunch while we learn more about the Toys for Tots program.

December 10th – Our Dayton BOMA Holiday Luncheon will be held at The Pentagon Tower Club in Beavercreek this year. Kettering Fairmont A Capella choir will be providing our entertainment.

January 24-27, 2025 – BOMA International Winter Business Meeting to be held in Indian Wells, California.

July 28, 2025 – Dayton BOMA 40th Annual Golf Outing to be held at Walnut Grove Country Club. 9am Shotgun Start

OUR VISION

BOMA will be the partner individuals in the commercial real estate industry choose to maximize value for their careers, organizations and assets.



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NEW FOR 2024!

The BOMA Office Floor Measurement Standard has been updated!

BOMA 2024 FOR OFFICE

BUILDINGS: STANDARD METHODS OF MEASUREMENT (ANSI/BOMA Z65.1-

2024) is the latest update to the office

standard, which has been regularly

revised to reflect the changing needs of

the commercial real estate market. BOMA's 2024 Office Standard includes many new enhancements and clarifications to address evolving building designs and tenant amenities.

This standard is intended exclusively for Office Buildings and their associated structures. It is applicable to all types of Office Buildings, regardless of the nature of the businesses they house; including but not limited to, various commercial, medical, institutional, and life science uses. It can be used for single tenant, multi-tenant, or multi-building configurations, and is suitable for measuring new, existing, and proposed Office Buildings.

This standard does not include the measurement of public sidewalks, surface parking, landscaping, drainage structures, or other site improvements. The primary purpose of this standard is to calculate Rentable Area, a crucial metric in office leasing. Nevertheless, it also provides area figures useful for space utilization analysis, valuation, benchmarking, and allocating building expenses across different cost centers.

To purchase the BOMA Office Floor Measurement Standard, go to boma.org.



OUR MISSION

To advance a vibrant, commercial real estate industry through advocacy, influence and knowledge.



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The BOMA App is your hub for everything BOMA, including each year's annual conference app and quick links to BOMA resources, allowing you to stay informed on the go. Just search "BOMA App" in the iTunes Store or Google Play.



2025 BOMA INTERNATIONAL WINTER BUSINESS MEETING

The challenge for every association is to stay ahead of the changing marketplace and evolving member and customer needs. BOMA International's 2025 Winter Business Meeting, being held January 24th – 27th in Indian Wells, California, will bring together BOMA leaders and property professionals from across the country to share ideas and learn from one another. Your involvement is critical in helping to shape the future of BOMA and the commercial real estate industry. With the collective knowledge and dedication of our members, we will overcome whatever challenges come our way to advance a vibrant commercial real estate industry through advocacy, influence and knowledge.

Registration

Registration is now open! Go to www.boma.org/wbm to register. Please note, cancellation deadline is January 10, 2025. No refunds will be issued after this date or conference no-show. Substitutions will be allowed in lieu of cancellations.



NAVIGATING OHIO'S WORKER'S COMPENSATION SYSTEM

For most employers, workers' compensation is one of a thousand items that require their attention daily. Most workers' compensation professionals will tell you that the best injury is one that never happens. The reality is that there are 257,000 private and public Ohio employers incurring approximately 67,432 allowable injuries in 2023. (Source: Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation 2023 Annual Report).

Managing a workers' compensation program can be simplified by implementing a few standardized processes that will make it easier for you to minimize lost days, control your costs and maintain productivity in your business.

Early Claim Intervention

Having a standardized injury reporting process and claim investigation mandate in place before an injury happens means that you will have tools at your disposal to quickly analyze what happened, is it work related and are there any red flags that will lead you to contest the claim.

Your Managed Care Organization (MCO) can provide your company with guidance on any questions related to injury reporting and seeking BWC (Bureau of Workers Compensation) authorized provider medical treatment. The injured worker will need to complete a First Report of Injury (FROI), which is the BWC form required for filing a claim application. It is also a good best practice to have your employee complete a supplemental accident report that is specific to your work environment and expands on some of the important questions that arise during an injury investigation, such as – were there any witnesses? Did you immediately notify your supervisor?

Minimizing Claim Costs

Once a claim application is filed with the BWC, things begin to move quickly and your window of opportunity to minimize the impact is small. The most common type of compensation is Temporary Total (TT). This is when the BWC pays the injured worker a portion of their regular pay to cover their lost wages while recovering from an allowed injury.

If you are not contesting the claim or its compensability, your focus should move to helping your injured workers get the necessary treatment they need to quickly return to full duty employment.

If you can accommodate a return to light duty while the treatment moves forward, then making a light duty job offer will prevent the claim from flipping from "medical only" to "lost time". It will also keep your injured worker from getting used to being off work because of the injury. If light duty is not an option, then another path is to pay the claimant their regular wages – also known as salary continuation – while they are off work.

Other Cost Containment Options

When a claim is allowed the BWC attaches a reserve to estimate and cover future costs. There are several ways to minimize the impact a reserve has on your annual premiums:

Settlement – the most effective way to close a claim and prevent future costs from being applied is to negotiate a full and final settlement with the injured worker. The settlement amount is paid out of the claim by the BWC, the cost is added to the overall claim cost and the injured worker receives monies in lieu of future treatment and compensation.

Disability Relief – The BWC currently has a program in place to recognize pre-existing conditions that negatively impact the allowed conditions or the injured worker's recovery from the allowed condition. The BWC will hold an informal conference with the employer/Third Party Administrator (TPA) to review the application and the medical that supports the request and then will determine an impact percentage between 0% and 100%. This percentage relates to the amount of "relief" the employer will receive due to filing a successful application.

Subrogation/No Fault MVA (Motor Vehicle Accident) – When a third-party is the cause of a workplace injury there may be relief that can be pursued to offset the cost of the claim. The most common example is an employee's claim that is the result of a non-at-fault vehicle accident involving a third party.

Navigating the workers' compensation system can feel frustrating and at times complicated, but with your MCO and TPA partners you have access to subject matter experts that can make your job easier and keep your premiums down.

If you have any questions, contact our Sedgwick program manager, Julia Bowling at julia.bowling@sedgwick.com or call (513) 218-4062.



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BOMA INTERNATIONAL BEGINS CANVASSING PROCESS FOR LATEST INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS STANDARDS

The Building Owners and Managers Association International is finalizing the revisions to its latest floor measurement standard, BOMA For Industrial Buildings Standard Method of Measurement (Z65.2). BOMA is soliciting any persons with an interest in voting on whether the standard should be accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

Brief History and Explanation

BOMA International has been developing floor measurement standards for more than 100 years and is currently working to publish the fifth edition of the Industrial Standard. This standard is intended for industrial and flex buildings and their associated structures, and may be applied to single tenant, multi-tenant or multi-building configurations. It also addresses questions that users of the previous BOMA Industrial Standards have asked the Interpretations Subcommittee.

In addition to the Industrial Standards, BOMA has published measurement standards for Office, our most widely known standard, Multi-Family and Hospitality Standards, Retail, Mixed-Use properties, and even a Gross Areas standard.

Explanation of ANSI's Function – Use of the Canvass Method

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) coordinates, facilitates and promotes the development of voluntary standards that are relied upon by industry, government agencies and consumers across the United States and around the world. ANSI does not develop standards. ANSI fosters the U.S. standardization system by accrediting the procedures of standard-setting organizations and subsequently approving individual documents as American National Standards. Nearly 220 ANSI-Accredited Standards Developers, including BOMA International, are now engaged in the creation and maintenance of voluntary consensus standards that are being used in virtually every industry sector. These standard developers—and the experts who populate them—work cooperatively to enhance the U.S. quality of life and improve the competitiveness of businesses operating in the global marketplace.

Accreditation by ANSI signifies that the procedures used by the standards body in connection with the development of American National Standards meet the Institute's essential requirements for openness, balance, consensus and due process. A standard that has been approved as an ANS is identified as such on the document's cover or in its introductory text.

Definition of Interest Categories

The BOMA Standards Secretariat will develop a list of potential canvasees consisting of those organizations, companies,

government agencies, standards developers, individuals, etc., known to be, or who have indicated that they are, directly and materially affected by the standard. The standards development process shall not be dominated by any single interest category, individual or organization. Dominance means a position or exercise of dominant authority, leadership or influence by reason of superior leverage, strength or representation to the exclusion of fair and equitable consideration of other viewpoints. Also, no individual shall represent more than one interest category, and only one individual may be a member of the canvass from the same company.

BOMA's standards development process will have a balance of interests. Participants from diverse interest categories shall be sought with the objective of achieving balance. Historically the criteria for balance are that a) no single interest category constitutes more than one third of the membership of a consensus body dealing with safety-related standards or b) no single interest category constitutes a majority (more than half) of the membership of a consensus body dealing with other than safety-related standards.

The interest categories for BOMA's American National Standards include:

Producer—The definition for this term encompasses those interests aligned with at-risk equity ownership of buildings and includes all producers and providers of space (building owners and managers) as well as agents, brokers, floor measurers, appraisers, architects and other designers who work on behalf of building owners and managers.

User—The definition for this term encompasses those interests aligned with those who use space within a building including tenants as well as brokers, agents, floor measurers, architects and interior designers and others who are in the contractual employ of tenants.

General Interest—The definition for this term encompasses all firms and individuals that do not have a direct alignment in the business interests of producers or users. Such firms or individuals may include management companies, facility managers, appraisers, architects and other design professions, general contractors, design-builders, construction managers and project estimators who have a general interest in floor measurement standards for office buildings.

If you are interested in serving as a canvasee, please complete the interest form by December 2, 2024, using this link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6GTGN8H>.



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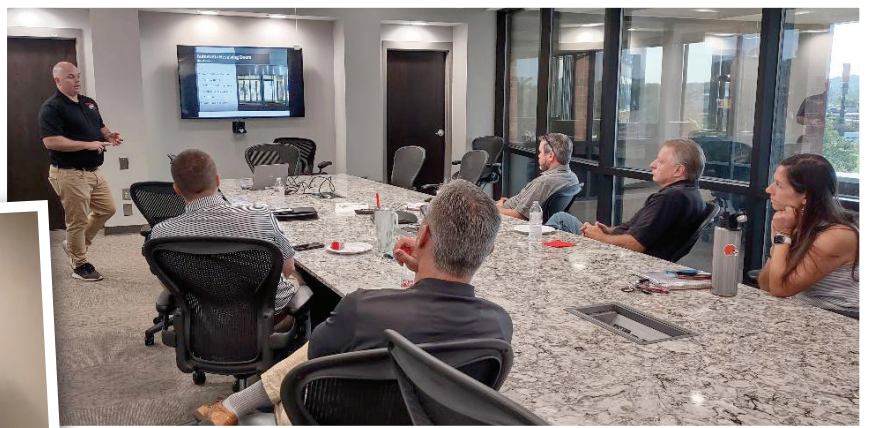
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Jeff Lentz with Aegis Protective Services joined us for lunch in September to assist us in brushing up on our CPR skills and AED training. Jeff has been a Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED instructor for over 10 years. Jeff, we appreciate you taking the time to educate us on these important lifesaving skills.



Dayton BOMA members gathered at the Montgomery County Business Solutions Center in September for a Breakfast & Learn Session. Our topic this month was "Entry Doors for Every Application" presented by Bob Denny with Modern Entrance Systems – now a part of ASSA ABLOY. Bob, thank you for joining us to share your knowledge on entry doors.



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SKYROCKETING PROPERTY INSURANCE RATES ARE LEADING TO CREATIVE SOLUTIONS

Extreme weather events are a major driver of the surge in property insurance rates, leading to substantial increases in operating expenses for commercial real estate owners.

The uncertainty surrounding the effectiveness of state reforms to control insurance costs is pushing property owners to consider alternative strategies like self-insurance.

The high-cost environment in commercial real estate has primarily been driven by the Federal Reserve's current tightening cycle. Rising borrowing costs have dominated industry discussions, and investors are waiting with bated breath for when interest rates finally fall. However, interest rates aren't the only rates that property owners pay close attention to. In recent years, property insurance rates have skyrocketed, increasing operating expenses and putting significant downward pressure on net operating income.

The Deloitte Center for Financial Services predicts a substantial rise in commercial property insurance costs across the U.S., projecting an increase of nearly 80 percent by 2030. This means average monthly premiums for commercial properties are expected to soar from \$2,726 to \$4,890. Between 2013 and 2023, these costs almost doubled as insurers strive to keep pace with escalating losses.

The main reason for these soaring rates is extreme weather. In 2023, there were a record-high 28 separate billion-dollar extreme weather events, with estimated recovery costs totaling \$92.9 billion. These events included 19 severe storms, four floods, and two tropical cyclones. Billion-dollar extreme weather events increased by 56 percent last year compared to 2022, and they were up 180 percent compared to a decade ago.

Rising insurance rates significantly impact commercial real estate owners. According to MSCI's U.S. Quarterly Property Index, insurance costs as a percentage of income receivable have more than doubled, jumping from 1 percent to 2.3 percent between 2018 and 2023. States like Florida and California are feeling the brunt of this increase. In the third quarter of 2023, these states recorded the highest insurance costs as a percentage of income receivable, with Florida at 4.4 percent and California at 3.6 percent.

Record-breaking insurance rate hikes can add hundreds or even thousands of dollars to annual costs, depending on the building's size and location. In some cases, soaring premiums erase an entire year's profits for building owners. The surge in insurance costs is also reported as one factor in the recent decline in property sales. "Deals that may have just fit what we are buying are now off the table because the insurance costs are just too high," said Ian Bel, managing member of multifamily landlord Olive Tree Holdings.

Mortgage lenders usually require property owners to obtain insurance covering the total rebuilding cost after a natural disaster. Some owners are trying to lower the amount, saying it's unlikely an entire building will be



decimated. Insurance brokers say some banks are open to the idea, especially if the rising costs threaten a default. Other banks are still insisting on full coverage.

The recent case of Three Pillars Capital Group offers an illuminating example. Until May 2023, real estate owner Three Pillars paid over \$630,000 annually to insure Houston's 544-unit Del Mar Apartments complex. When the insurance expired and Three Pillars requested quotes for a new policy, the estimated cost tripled to about \$1.8 million. Three Pillars tried to persuade its mortgage lender to agree to lower coverage. Instead, the lender forced it to accept a new insurance policy that cost nearly \$2.3 million annually.

Due to increased insurance payments, Three Pillars claimed the building's revenues were no longer enough to cover expenses and debt payments. Three Pillars recently took the unusual step of suing its lender for breach of contract and fiduciary duty. They alleged their mortgage lender forced them to obtain unnecessary and costly insurance.

Gambling on the future

Unusual lawsuits like Three Pillars are one effect of a property insurance market buckling under the weight of climate change. Property owners are devising creative solutions to deal with the problem, and one of the more unique ideas is self-insurance. On the surface, the idea seems like a desperate and wild choice. However, in states like Florida, where reforms have not slowed the insurance crisis, more building owners are open to self-insurance as an option.

Self-insurance is when a property owner pays all or part of their own insurance losses and assumes the role of an insurer by establishing internal systems to settle their claims. Also referred to as 'alternative risk transfer,' property owners design their own insurance program with self-insurance.

The benefits of self-insurance include securing broader or more appropriate insurance coverage that may not be available commercially. Self-insurance may also create an incentive to make buildings more resilient to natural disasters because, if managed properly, they can reduce premiums.

Self-insurers adopt formal systems for paying losses, and the function is sometimes outsourced to a claims manager or third-party administrator. Self-insurance requires a more hands-on approach to loss prevention than if a property

owner were insured in the traditional market. It also provides a greater incentive to reduce claims, save premiums, and increase profits and cash flow.

While self-insurance offers numerous benefits, it also carries substantial risks. In a severe natural disaster like Hurricane Ian that struck Florida in 2022, some property owners might find the enormous costs of clean-up and rebuilding unaffordable. This scenario could spell disaster for the property owners and tenants, whose belongings and livelihoods could be completely devastated.

Mortgage companies typically mandate that borrowers maintain traditional insurance policies. Similarly, some vendor contracts require traditional insurance to safeguard goods stored on-site. However, self-insurance can be an appealing alternative for property owners not bound by these requirements, especially in markets like Florida, where insurance rates are soaring and qualification demands are becoming more stringent.

In many cases, self-insurance is an option that works best with larger real estate companies. A real estate firm with dozens of properties may have the financial wherewithal to withstand a natural disaster. Self-insurance would be an economic calculation to a larger firm and a gamble that if the worst does come to pass, they have the capital required to ride out business closures, rebuild, or sell the land.

A smaller investor with a handful of properties is in a much different position. Investors like that are more likely to be unable to survive the financial shock from a major hurricane, especially if their building is destroyed and they lose the tenants they depend on for revenue. The ultimate solution is for state policy to reign in insurance costs, which has proven to be a complicated problem.

In Florida, reforms in the past two legislative sessions and a special session last year have aimed to reduce the number of lawsuits blamed for many of the state's insurance issues. For the most part, the impact of the reforms hasn't been felt yet. Many insurance carriers continue to stop writing policies in Florida because they fear the increasing strength of hurricanes. Meanwhile, the carriers staying in the Sunshine State continue to raise rates significantly.

These factors have left many property owners, big and small, desperate enough to consider a solution like self-insurance. The reward for self-insurance is not riches but survival, which means some property owners are willing to gamble their future on the idea, even if it turns out poorly.

Less drastic solutions

Of course, self-insurance is not the only option. Several other strategies for reducing property insurance costs aren't as drastic. The number one strategy may be a basic reality check: premiums will keep increasing, and bottom lines must be adjusted to account for this. Insurance is no longer just another expense item rolled over annually, and building owners may have to get used to more frequently changing packages and budgeting more for insurance for the foreseeable future.

Closer relationships with contacts at carriers may also be

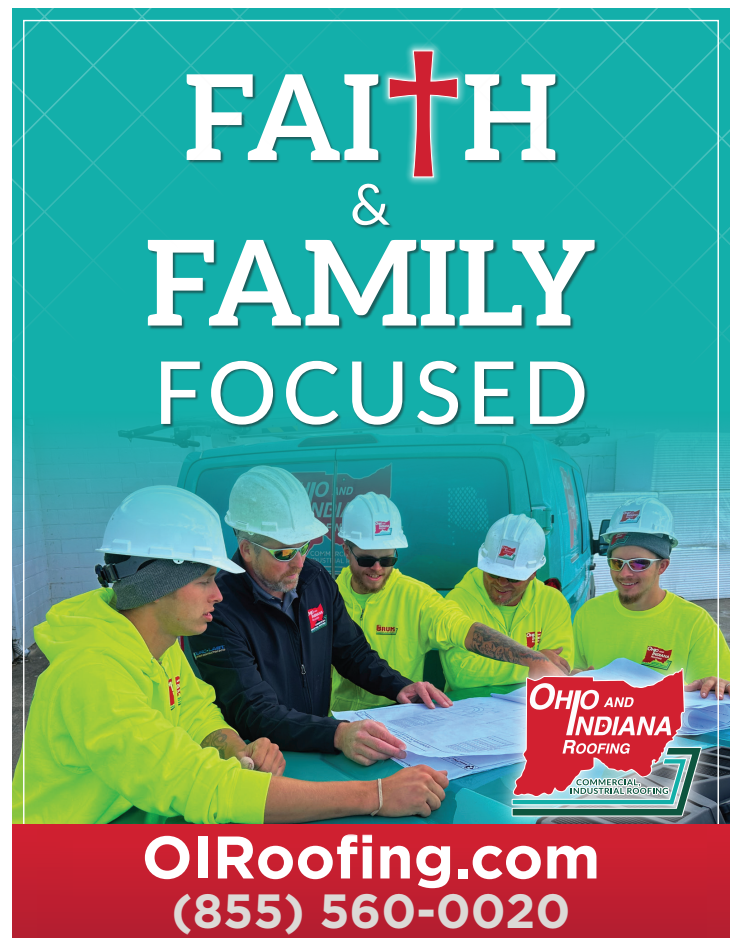
needed. Property owners can contact insurers as many as 180 days before applications are due rather than the typical 90 days. They may also provide more detailed supporting data on reducing risk and limiting losses. Application submissions have taken on increased importance, and more than ever, they need top-notch narratives of loss-control strategies.

Property owners in disaster-prone areas may also consider alternatives to traditional commercial property insurance, such as 'parametric insurance.' This type of policy pays out a set dollar amount based on the characteristics of a natural disaster instead of the repair costs. The ratio of loss to payout is typically less favorable with a parametric policy than a traditional one, but it can give building owners more stability.

Some property owners are considering self-insurance, highlighting how challenging the commercial insurance market has become for the industry. Extreme weather may not slow down soon, but the market for commercial property insurance may eventually stabilize. Higher premiums could attract fresh capital for the insurance industry, as some view them as an entrepreneurial opportunity ripe for innovation. For now, property owners are feeling the brunt of higher insurance costs at a time when borrowing costs are already high. Self-insurance is a gamble some building owners are willing to take in an insurance game that's becoming very high stakes.

By Nick Pipitonep, Staff Writer

Nick is an accomplished writer and content producer who has contributed extensively to Propmodo with numerous articles focusing on built environment topics.



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BOMA PARTICIPATES IN EV CHARGER MEETING

As electric vehicles proliferate, the inconsistent availability of charging stations continues to be a hurdle to wider adoption. Within this context, the auto industry is particularly motivated to find solutions, and BOMA was invited to join a high-level roundtable recently hosted by the Alliance for Automotive Innovation, the main association for the U.S. auto industry.

Attended by Advocacy staff Ken Rosenfeld and Cameron Macuch, the event pulled together a number of trade associations with varying perspectives to discuss ways to potentially collaborate and advance EV charging infrastructure. This was a valuable opportunity for BOMA to provide the perspective of CRE, which often finds itself

as the target of governmental mandates because of the reliance on parking spots.

As noted in the BOMA policy brief on the topic, CRE often has a conflicted and nuanced view, forced to balance the pluses and minuses of providing chargers as a property amenity while pushing back on mandates that often make little sense financially or environmentally.

BOMA thanks the Alliance for advancing this policy discussion, which will continue in the coming months.

A copy of the BOMA policy brief can be found here: <https://boma.informz.net/BOMA/data/images/BOMA%20Policy%20Brief%20-%20Electric%20Vehicles.pdf>

IDF AWARDS BOMA/GEORGIA ON PREMISES LIABILITY REFORM

The Industry Defense Fund Oversight Committee approved an application from BOMA/Georgia to support ongoing efforts to reform premises liability in the state.

BOMA/Georgia has been calling on the Georgia General Assembly to set a reasonable standard of liability when an unrelated third party commits an act against a person on the landowner's property. Georgia's premises liability law dates back to 1895, and over the last several decades the courts have gradually relaxed the standards.

The issue came to a head in 2023, when the Georgia Supreme Court affirmed a jury's \$45 million verdict awarded to a man shot in the parking lot of an Atlanta drugstore, holding that CVS failed to provide sufficient security and was apportioned 95% of the blame.

An important first step in lawsuit reform passed in the

most-recent legislative session, directing the state's Insurance Commissioner to collect data from insurers regarding the impact of tort lawsuits and the assessment of tort-related risks.



BOMA Georgia will continue to engage directly with the governor's office and with a coalition of business and nonprofit partners, and anticipates introduction of legislation during the 2025 session that addresses industry concerns.

NEW RESOURCES COMING ON BUILDING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

State and local governments are increasingly turning to Building Performance Standards (BPS) as an option to address emissions and energy goals, leaving CRE to determine what policies can be supported and what practical next-steps are needed on the ground. BOMA local associations have been deeply involved in many parts of the country, engaging in the design and implementation of BPS policies. The policies tend to share some similarities, but can vary widely in timelines, goals, enforcement and exemptions. As the industry moves to provide assistance, one new resource has just been published and another is on the way.

The Real Estate Roundtable has released "Lessons Learned to Shape Fair and Reasonable Building Performance Standards," a substantial guide mainly intended to be sent to the U.S. Department of Energy as the agency assists localities and awards related grants. The guide

provides a helpful set of 20 policy recommendations, but the Roundtable does not operate at the state and local level and does not have to navigate the market-by-market differences that BOMA local associations are accustomed to. As BOMA and our partner real estate groups (NAIOP, ICSC, NAHB, etc.) deal with BPS proposals across the country, BOMA International is currently preparing a policy brief that will be released within the next month and will be more geared toward our local associations and reflect the great work already done in many markets (AOBA, BOMA/Denver Metro, to name a few). The brief will provide context on the BPS trend, summaries of existing policies, and common issues to watch for.

Go to: <https://boma.informz.net/BOMA/data/images/RER%20BPS%20Policy%20Guide%20Oct%202024%20FINAL.pdf> for your copy.



This year's Dayton BOMA trade show was held in October at the Presidential Banquet Center in Kettering. What a great opportunity for our Principal members to get a better understanding of what our Associate members have to offer. This event is about making connections and building relationships. We'd like to thank our Associates for taking the time to set up a table and our Principal members for their time as well.

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WHY WE HAVE TO RETHINK INDOOR AIR QUALITY POLICIES IN THE WORKPLACE

How do you address IAQ in your spaces? Here's how you can go above and beyond code to optimize the health and wellbeing of people in your building.

If you asked a building or facilities professional how they address indoor air quality (IAQ) in their spaces, they would probably point you in the direction of building code. The problem is that the building code is only designed to meet the minimum standards for air quality. In other words, the code aims to minimize health issues related to poor IAQ, instead of going above and beyond to optimize the health and wellbeing of the people inside.

Certain building certifications like WELL, LEED, and Fitwel provide deeper guidance into how buildings can ensure their occupants breathe clean air, but there's still a lack of consensus among these certifications. Plus, many of these are just recommendations and not strictly enforced. As a result, we only see a small percentage of buildings that actually pursue and achieve these certifications.

Ultimately, it's up to each company to decide which IAQ policies they are willing to commit to, and who will take ownership—the facilities team, building engineers, the workplace team, and even the HR team all play a role in this.

Before we can get into the details of how we should plan and execute an IAQ project, the crucial first step is understanding why we should care so much about improving the air our occupants and employees breathe.

The Silent Killer of 7 Million People

A common misconception many people have is that poor air quality only affects certain parts of the world (we've all seen pictures of Beijing during heavy pollution). The truth is, less than 1% of people around the world breathe air that meets the World Health Organization (WHO) standards. The health-related consequences of this can be devastating, from infections and heart disease to stroke and respiratory distress.

In total, the cumulative impact of outdoor and indoor air pollution results in 7 million premature deaths each year worldwide. To put that number into context, poor IAQ has a greater impact on our health and quality of life than malaria, HIV, drugs, alcohol, and even war. The data couldn't be more clear: air quality is a crisis that can no longer be ignored, and we have to start doing something about it.

The Role of the Workplace in Improving Health and Wellbeing

Tackling air pollution is too big of a job for one person to handle, but there is a way that workplace leaders can help protect their employees from the health-related impacts of breathing polluted air. It all starts with the air that circulates your building.

Unlike outdoor air, we can completely control the air that's inside our buildings. That means poor IAQ is a 100% solvable problem! Because we spend 90% of our time indoors, an effective IAQ solution can drastically reduce the amount

of polluted air we breathe every day. As an employer, building owner/operator, or facility management professional, you could potentially have a greater positive impact on your occupants' health and well-being than their doctors—just by improving the air they breathe at work.



Looking Beyond Building Code and Prescriptive Metrics

Improving IAQ in the workplace requires a shift in how we think about our spaces. First and foremost, we have to see code for what it is: a checklist (i.e., a “this building hopefully won't kill you” checklist). Meeting code criteria is a necessary first step to having a healthy building, but we have to be more aspirational and go above and beyond what the code requires to promote health and wellbeing, instead of simply trying to prevent employees from getting sick.

The second part of the equation is changing how we evaluate air quality. Many buildings rely on prescriptive engineering metrics, like HVAC set points and airflow rates, to get an idea of how effectively their building delivers fresh air. The challenge here is twofold. First, these metrics are only meaningful to engineers. Second, they don't measure or guarantee outcomes.

HVAC systems are built to specific conditions in each space, but we know that spaces get repurposed all the time, occupancy levels fluctuate throughout the day, the original room design gets changed, and equipment eventually breaks down. Prescriptive engineering metrics aren't equipped or designed to provide real-time data to help us understand how these events actively impact air quality.

Instead of looking at prescriptive parameters to see how buildings should perform, we should measure IAQ data in real time to know how the building is actually performing. With performance-based data, we gain the most accurate picture of air quality in our buildings and can be confident that our occupants are in a healthy space.

Why We Have to Shift the Mindset About IAQ

The great news is that we have performance-based IAQ monitors available to help quantify the health and well-being of our spaces. The not-so-great news is that many companies hesitate to invest in IAQ solutions because they're more focused on the immediate costs than the long-term benefits. However, when you crunch the numbers, you'll find that IAQ monitoring and improvement take up a very small percentage of the budget for a multi-million dollar building.

It's not uncommon to see a company spend \$100 million to construct a state-of-the-art, high-performance office building with the latest technology and amenities, only to question the ROI of a \$10,000 annual budget for IAQ monitoring—

an investment that directly improves employee health and wellbeing, which leads to higher productivity and satisfaction.

What Are the Next Steps Building and Workplace Leaders Should Take?

Shifting the mindset about IAQ is just the first step to creating a healthier workplace. The next phase is initiating an IAQ project, which includes four key steps:

- 1. Get aligned with your team.** Understand that IAQ is not the sole responsibility of the building engineers or facility managers. This should be a priority for the entire company, as it impacts your most valuable asset: your employees.
- 2. Structure your budget correctly.** Make separate budgets for IAQ monitoring and improvement. Simply having the data isn't enough; be sure you can address the issues that you discover in your IAQ data.
- 3. Don't treat IAQ as an afterthought.** Strategically prioritize and budget for IAQ early on, either during the building design process or during your search for a rental location. If you're renting office space, get IAQ terms into your leasing service level agreements (SLAs) before you sign.
- 4. Create a data strategy.** Many projects install monitors just to tick a box for building certification requirements, and most of the time the data sits untouched on a dashboard. Make sure you have the time, expertise, and technology in place to help you get the most out of your data.

Investing in better IAQ for the workplace will yield enormous long-term benefits for both the company and its employees. Until the standards change, it's up to each company and building to decide if they will go beyond the bare minimum to create a workplace that truly promotes the health, well-being, and productivity of its employees.

About the Author

Liam Bates is the CEO of Kaiterra.

AFTER HOURS NETWORKING EVENTS

A big thank you goes out to Dave Wallace for sponsoring our October After Hours Event at Dublin Pub in the Oregon District.

If you weren't able to join us in October, we'll be getting together again in January. If you're interested in sponsoring this event, please give Nancy a call at (937) 299-2662 or send her an email at nancy@bomad Dayton.org, for more details.

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