

Striving to be Drug Free  
for a Safe Industry

# BERC



Winter 2025

## NEWSLETTER

*Building & Construction Resource Center, Inc.*

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## LIFE COMES WITH CHALLENGES YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS HERE TO HELP

### PERSPECTIVES

An AllOne Health Company

ACCESS CODE:  
**BLD500**

Your Assistance Program can help you reduce stress, improve mental health, and make life easier by connecting you to the right information, resources, and referrals. All services are free, confidential, and available to you and your family members. This includes access to short-term counseling and the wide range of services listed below:



**MENTAL HEALTH SESSIONS** - Manage stress, anxiety, and depression, resolve conflict, improve relationships, and address any personal issues. Choose from in-person sessions, video counseling, or telephonic counseling.

**LIFE COACHING** - Reach personal and professional goals, manage life transitions, overcome obstacles, strengthen relationships, and achieve greater balance.

**FINANCIAL CONSULTATION** - Build financial wellness related to budgeting, buying a home, paying off debt, resolving general tax questions, preventing identity theft, and saving for retirement or tuition.

**LEGAL REFERRALS** - Receive referrals for personal legal matters including estate planning, wills, real estate, bankruptcy, divorce, custody, and more.

**WORK-LIFE RESOURCES AND REFERRALS** - Obtain information and referrals when seeking childcare, adoption, special needs support, eldercare, housing, transportation, education, and pet care.

**PERSONAL ASSISTANT** - Save time with referrals for travel and entertainment, seeking professional services, cleaning services, home food delivery, and managing everyday tasks.

**MEDICAL ADVOCACY** - Get help navigating insurance, obtaining doctor referrals, securing medical equipment, and planning for transitional care and discharge.

**MEMBER PORTAL** - Access your benefits 24/7 365 through your member portal with online requests and chat options. Explore thousands of self-help tools and resources including articles, assessments, podcasts, and resource locators.

Your EAP is available 24/7 at  
800.456.6327 or [www.perspectivesltd.com](http://www.perspectivesltd.com)

# Self-Care Isn't Selfish



## **A NEW DOT CLEARINGHOUSE REGULATION.... KEEPING YOUR CDL ACTIVE**

This information is for our BCRC Participants who carry an active Commercial Driver's License (CDL), or Commercial Learner's Permit (CLP) as outlined by the requirements of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) division of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

If you have had an incident that has caused you to have a "prohibited" status in the FMCSA Clearinghouse there is a new rule that became effective November 18, 2024, that negatively impacts your CDL or CLP. While the first Clearinghouse final rule stopped drivers with a "prohibited" status from operating a commercial motor vehicle (CMV), the second Clearinghouse Rule, known as Clearinghouse II, goes further by requiring State Driver Licensing Agencies to downgrade the commercial driving privileges of anyone who has a "prohibited" status in the Clearinghouse until the driver has completed the return-to-duty process (RTD).

This means that, as of November 18, 2024, having a "prohibited" Clearinghouse status will result in losing or being denied a CDL or CLP.

If you have a new violation in your Clearinghouse record, you will see a message on your Driver Dashboard prompting you to select a Substance Abuse Professional (SAP).

### **SELECT A SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROFESSIONAL (SAP) FROM THE CLEARINGHOUSE SAP LISTING**

- Your employer is required to provide you with a list of DOT-qualified Substance Abuse Professionals (SAPs).
- Once the designated SAP accepts you, they will evaluate you and provide recommendations for education/treatment.

### **TAKE THE RETURN-TO-DUTY TEST**

- You must be sent by your employer; only DOT-regulated employers, and not the employee, request the return-to duty test. If you are an owner-operator, your designated consortium/third-party administrator (C/TPA) must send you for this test.

### **ONCE YOUR CLEARINGHOUSE STATUS IS "NOT PROHIBITED," YOU ARE ELIGIBLE TO RESUME PERFORMING SAFETY SENSITIVE FUNCTIONS.**

- Your status will be updated when your employer enters your negative return-to-duty test result in the Clearinghouse.
- To remain in a "not prohibited" status, your employer must complete the follow-up testing plan with you as specified by the SAP, which must include a minimum of six unannounced observed follow-up tests in the first 12 months of returning to performing safety-sensitive functions. If you are an owner-operator, your designated C/TPA must complete your observed follow-up testing plan.

Information about your drug and alcohol program violation is retained in the Clearinghouse for five years from the date of the violation determination or until the successful completion of the follow-up testing plan, whichever is later.

Here are helpful links and the telephone number for the FMCSA for your convenience.

The FMCSA Clearinghouse Website - <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/about>

The FMCSA Clearinghouse Learning Center - <https://clearinghouse.fmcsa.dot.gov/Learn>

The FMCSA telephone number (202) 366-4000.

Please note that while the BCRC does help Employers with the FMCSA random selections and queries, our Office does not have the authority to address "prohibited" statuses for CDL drivers.

Any of these issues must be managed by the driver and his/her Employer.



# WINTER WEATHER CONSTRUCTION SAFETY TIPS

Construction doesn't stop when winter weather strikes, so it's important to know what steps to take to keep your workers warm and safe. Before the next major winter storm starts to impact your area with snow and ice accumulation, be prepared and review these winter weather safety tips for keeping your workers safe.

[www.constructconnect.com](http://www.constructconnect.com)

## INSPECT & CLEAR JOBSITES

When winter weather hits you need to inspect your construction sites for downed power lines and trees before allowing workers to begin work. Clear all snow and ice from walking and working surfaces, including walkways, roofs, scaffolding, and ladders. Put down salt or sand to melt icy patches and improve traction for workers. Knock off any icicles that have formed or cordon off areas to prevent workers from accidentally breaking them loose and creating falling object hazards.

## PROVIDE PROPER PPE

Be sure to take extra steps in ensuring workers are wearing all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) when winter weather conditions are present. Hard hats should be worn at all times to protect against falling objects like icicles and slips and falls on ice. Using liners in hard hats will help keep workers warm and prevent heat from escaping. Gloves and mittens should be selected that enable workers with enough manual dexterity to work with tools and materials. Remind workers to keep their gloves on at all times, especially when climbing ladders, scaffolding, or getting onto construction equipment. Workers should wear waterproof boots with non-slip soles and extra socks to protect against the cold if wearing steel-toed boots since the metal acts as a cold sink.

## PROVIDE A HEATED BREAK AREA

Workers expend more energy when working in cold weather in order to keep their bodies warm. Make sure you have a heated trailer, tent or indoor area for workers to warm up from the cold. Limit exposure to the elements by encouraging workers to take frequent breaks in order to rest and warm up, drink warm liquids and change out of wet clothing. This is a good time to check workers for signs of fatigue, frostbite or hypothermia. Remind workers to limit consumption of caffeine, nicotine and other stimulants as this increases their heart rate, causing them to feel warmer than they actually are. If using portable heaters in break areas, make sure to properly vent the area and use CO sensors to monitor for carbon monoxide exposure.

## WATCH THE WEATHER

The last thing you want is to have a construction site full of workers stranded because a blizzard blew in without you knowing. Give your workers adequate time to secure the construction site and get home safely before severe weather strikes. Make sure workers are wearing appropriate clothing for the weather and encourage them to take frequent breaks to warm up from the cold.

## WARM UP EQUIPMENT & TOOLS

Follow the manufacturer's instructions on properly warming up heavy equipment before use. Electrical wires and hoses can become brittle in cold temperatures, so it is important to allow those to heat up properly to avoid damaging your equipment.

## LAYER ON THE CLOTHING

Keeping warm is one of the most important things when working in cold weather. Layer clothing with some moisture-wicking thermals on your inner layer and have a waterproof outer layer to prevent moisture from soaking into your clothing. If clothing gets wet, it's important to change into dry clothes to avoid losing body heat. Limit the amount of skin exposed to cold temperatures with careful attention to the extremities by wearing knit hats and earmuffs for the head, wool socks for the feet, balaclavas for the face, and gloves and mittens for the hands.

## PUT EMERGENCY KITS IN WORK VEHICLES

Make sure your vehicles are equipped with Winter Weather Emergency Kits. Your emergency kits should include a shovel, ice scraper and brush, sleeping bag, water, non-perishable snacks like protein bars, tow straps, emergency flares and a backup battery for your cell phone. It's also a good idea to have some cat litter, salt, or sand to help with traction in case you get stuck. Give yourself plenty of time to get to your destination and leave plenty of space between yourself and other vehicles to avoid accidents.



# DAYLIGHT SAVINGS WINTER BLUES....



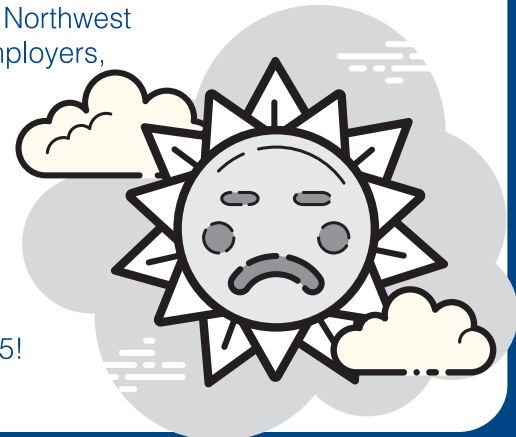
No, that's not the title of a hit song from the 50's or the R&B charts of the 70's. It's a real feeling that a lot of people get when we "fall" back every October or November and set the clocks back that hour to get an extra hour sleep and extend the day. The problem that settles in is the fact that we no longer have any sunny hours to ourselves. All the Little League and soccer games are over. The boating and fishing seasons are ending, and the dull drums of winter begin to creep up on us. The cold temperatures, damp air and eventual snow and ice are just weeks away. Everyone starts to think about the long winter ahead. Add to this all the emotions of the Holiday Season, the pressure of seeing family, not seeing family, missing loved ones who may have passed, being at multiple events, traveling, whether local or across the country, all the costs associated with the holidays, the uncertainty of work during the winter. All of these make up the Daylight Savings Blues.

That's why it is so important to step back and focus on the positives of the past year. Make time to reflect on a family vacation or the fishing trip with your friends but keep something in the forefront of our minds to distract us from the winter blahs. The hustle and bustle of the holidays can do that, in part, when there over many people slide back to that same rut and just plug through trying to get to spring.

As sad as all this might sound, we only mention it to remind all our participants that their mental health is a constant concern at BCRC, and we have so many avenues to assist them with maintaining it. That Perspectives, our employee assistance program, offers advice and counseling on so many subjects to help our participants manage their stress and mental health.

Mental health has been at the forefront of the election campaigns and healthcare industry in recent months but has always been a priority in the construction industry in Northwest Indiana, whether in our Union Halls, contractor associations or signatory employers, keeping a healthy workforce has been our focus since 1992.

So, as we enter 2025 and all the excitement of a new year, like weddings, birthdays, babies, grandkids and all the things that make our lives, and families special, take the time to take care of you. Consciously invest in your health with exercise, good diet, and plenty of rest. Take the time to care for your mental health as well.



## HOW TO AVOID WINTER CRUSHING EMPLOYEE MORALE

As the mercury drops, the challenges faced by construction workers don't just remain confined to physical hardships. There's a deeper, often overlooked battle being fought – that of mental well-being and morale. Here's how winter impacts the construction industry, both physically and psychologically.

## WHY WELLBEING IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT DURING WINTER MONTHS

While winter's physical challenges are evident and immediate, its psychological challenges can have long-term implications. Mental well-being plays a crucial role in determining the overall safety performance of workers. Lower engagement, increased absenteeism, and even potential substance abuse can be a result of ignoring the mental strains of winter. Investing in well-being isn't just a good-to-do action; it's a necessity. It directly influences the quality of work, reduces costs associated with injuries, and rework, and most importantly, ensures a happier, more engaged, and resilient workforce.

## IMPROVE MORALE IN WINTER

5 actionable tips you can easily implement in your team

- **Peer Support Groups:** Create support groups within the team. These groups can be a space for sharing concerns, offering solutions, and simply venting.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** Recognize and reward employees who display exceptional commitment and perseverance during these challenging months.
- **Stay Active:** Encourage physical activities like stretching exercises during breaks. Physical activity can help combat the effects of SAD.
- **Healthy Diet:** Provide access to a balanced diet with essential vitamins and minerals that can combat the physical and mental toll of winter.
- **Stay Connected:** Use tools and platforms like PepTalk to maintain communication, monitor morale, and implement interventions when required.



## UNDERSTANDING THE BROADER IMPLICATIONS OF WINTER IN CONSTRUCTION

The repercussions of not addressing winter's challenges in construction aren't just confined to the colder months. The ripple effects continue long after, manifesting in various forms. From increased insurance claims due to non-fatal injuries to the costs associated with project delays, reworks, and snags. But more than the financial burden, there's an immeasurable cost related to the long-term mental health of employees, a sector of the industry often overlooked.

## THE FINANCIAL SIDE OF WINTER

The construction industry, with its razor-thin margins, can hardly afford the additional financial pressures brought on by winter. One quarter of non-fatal injuries, leading to hefty insurance claims, are a testament to the season's perils. Couple this with the rework costs due to reduced quality, and the numbers start to paint a grim picture.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF WINTER

But beyond the numbers, there's a human story, often untold. The construction worker, battling not just the elements but also their own mind. The constant fatigue, reduced concentration, and the looming shadow of Seasonal Affective Disorder. Each day in winter becomes not just about constructing buildings but reconstructing one's own mental fortitude.

# KEEPING PETS SAFE DURING COLD WEATHER

**WINTER WELLNESS:** Has your pet had his/her preventive care exam yet? Cold weather may worsen some medical conditions such as arthritis. Your pet should be examined by a veterinarian at least once a year, and it's as good a time as any to get him/her checked out to make sure (s)he is ready and as healthy as possible for cold weather.

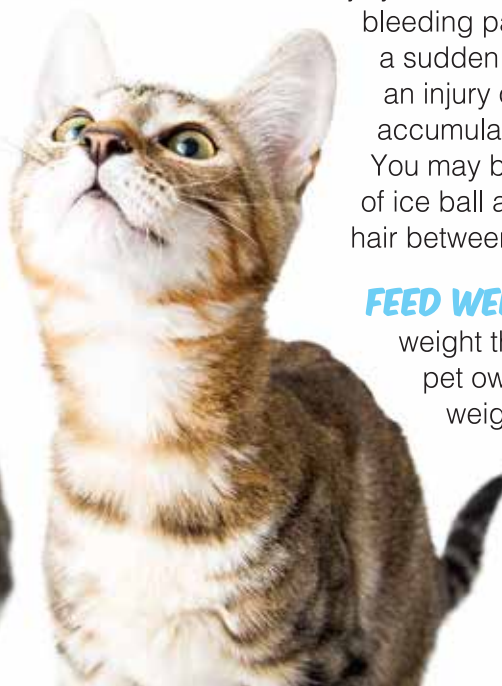
**KNOW THE LIMITS:** Just like people, pets' cold tolerance can vary from pet to pet based on their coat, body fat stores, activity level, and health. Be aware of your pet's tolerance for cold weather, and adjust accordingly. You will probably need to shorten your dog's walks in very cold weather to protect you both from weather-associated health risks. Arthritic and elderly pets may have more difficulty walking on snow and ice and may be more prone to slipping and falling. Long-haired or thick-coated dogs tend to be more cold-tolerant, but are still at risk in cold weather. Short-haired pets feel the cold faster because they have less protection, and short-legged pets may become cold faster because their bellies and bodies are more likely to come into contact with snow-covered ground.

**PROVIDE CHOICES:** Just like you, pets prefer comfortable sleeping places and may change their location based on their need for more or less warmth. Give them some safe options to allow them to vary their sleeping place to adjust to their needs.

**STAY INSIDE:** Cats and dogs should be kept inside during cold weather. It's a common belief that dogs and cats are more resistant than people to cold weather because of their fur, but it's untrue. Like people, cats and dogs are susceptible to frostbite and hypothermia and generally should be kept inside. Longer-haired and thick-coated dog breeds, such as huskies and other dogs bred for colder climates, are more tolerant of cold weather; but no pet should be left outside for long periods in below-freezing weather.

**CHECK THE PAWS:** Check your dog's paws frequently for signs of cold-weather injury or damage, such as cracked or bleeding paw pads. During a walk, a sudden lameness may be due to an injury or may be due to ice accumulation between his/her toes. You may be able to reduce the chance of ice ball accumulation by clipping the hair between your dog's toes.

**FEED WELL:** Keep your pet at a healthy weight throughout the winter. Some pet owners feel that a little extra weight gives their pet some extra protection from cold, but the health risks associated with that outweigh any potential benefits. Watch your pet's body condition and keep them in the healthy range.



# ANNUAL HOLIDAY

# Coloring Contest

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ What do you want to be when you grow up? \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE CIRCLE THE  
APPROPRIATE AGE GROUP:

0-2 YRS    3-5 YRS

6-8 YRS    9-13 YRS

BCRC is having our Annual Holiday Coloring Contest! We will be judging four age groups. The winner from each age group will win a \$25.00 gift card. The winner will also have their first name & winning picture printed in our semi-annual newsletter!

Parents or Guardians, please complete the entry form. One winner will be chosen on March 10, 2025.

All submissions should be dropped off or mailed in to the BCRC office (6050 Southport Rd., Ste.B, Portage, IN 46368), no later than March 3, 2025.

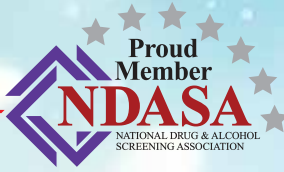
Additional copies can be printed off our website [www.bcrcnet.com](http://www.bcrcnet.com) under the "News and Events" tab at the top of the home page.

Parents/Guardians by signing this, you understand that if your child wins, BCRC will publish your child's FIRST NAME, AGE and a copy of their winning project in the semi-annual newsletter.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call (219) 764-9500.



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for a Safe Industry



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## PERSPECTIVES

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Your EAP are available 24/7 at  
800.456.6327 or [www.perspectivesltd.com](http://www.perspectivesltd.com)

**ACCESS CODE: BLD500**

**BCRC is pleased to announce that you can now send and receive text messages using the number (219) 350-3163. This addition enhances our communication capabilities, allowing us to provide more efficient and responsive service to our clients. We encourage you to utilize this convenient method to reach out to us for inquiries, updates, or support. As always, our team remains committed to providing timely and high-quality support, ensuring that your experience with BCRC is seamless and satisfactory.**

COMPLETE BCRC INFO  
Including Collection Site Locations & Hours  
On the web at [www.BCRCNET.com](http://www.BCRCNET.com)

The BCRC office will be closed on the following days in observance of the holidays!



# REMINDER...

Send Your Prescription to the MRO by  
Fax: (385) 549-8622 • Email: [myrx@wfqa.com](mailto:myrx@wfqa.com)  
<http://training.wfqa.com/rxInstructions.pdf>

**NEW YEARS DAY:** Wednesday, Jan. 1st  
**MEMORIAL DAY:** Monday, May 26th  
**INDEPENDENCE DAY:** Friday, July 4th