



Rhode Island Local Technical Assistance Program

Quarterly News & Updates

Summer 2023 | Issue 8

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Summer Has Arrived

So far, we've seen mostly below-average temperatures and relatively comfortable dew points (at least in June) as summer got off to a slow start. Unfortunately, if history is any indicator of what summer may bring, it may still shape up to be hot this year.

According to an NBC 10 comparative study of historical temperatures¹, while average temperatures this summer have been below average and rising slowly, they are still rising from past decades. In addition, over the past 50 years, the city of Providence has seen, on average, 11 additional days at or above 85 degrees annually. And with these increasing temperatures comes a higher risk of heat-related illnesses.



Employees who work outdoors face many potential dangers associated with overexposure to heat. Working in direct sunlight, high temperatures and humidity, physical exertion, and lack

of sufficient hydration can lead to heat-related illness and even death. What can you do to stay safe as summer temps rise? First, be sure that you and your team have access to plenty of cool drinking water and shaded areas. The risk of heat-related illnesses is highest this time of year and taking regular rest breaks in a cool shaded area and maintaining hydration can go a long way toward reducing the effects of working in the summer heat.

Wearing appropriate clothing and PPE is also critical to reducing heat-related risks. Some precautions you can take include:

- Drink small amounts of water frequently
- Use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 and always follow manufacturer's directions
- Use tents for shade on stationary job sites if adequate shade is not available
- Wear hard hats with vents to reduce heat and a longer/full brim to block the sun; If no hard hat is needed, wear a wide-brim hat to protect your face, ears, neck, and scalp
- Avoid wearing rain-resistant or protective gear any longer than necessary
- Consider wearing wet neck towels, cooling neck scarves, or cooling vests to keep body heat down
- Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, breathable clothing (such as cotton) if possible and carry spare shirts to replace wet/sweaty shirts (which can trap heat) as needed
- Use bug and tick repellants, but be sure to avoid putting it on your face

And the best things you can do for you and your team?

- Know potential hazards and how to manage them
- Train employees on the risks of heat illness, prevention, and how and when to respond to symptoms
- Have an emergency plan in place and communicate it with supervisors and workers

1. Erne, Christina. "Rising Average of Hot Summer Days in Rhode Island." *NBC 10 News*, WJAR, 7 July 2023, <https://turnto10.com/weather/weather-blog/hot-summer-days-rhode-island-85-90-heat-humidity-massachusetts-connecticut-scorching-wave-coast>. Accessed 7 July 2023.

Coming Soon!



New Equipment Coming to RI LTAP Equipment Loan Program

In 2021 the Rhode Island LTAP introduced the Equipment Loan Program with laptops available for loan to enable municipal personnel to participate in remote learning opportunities. Now, we're expanding the RI LTAP Equipment Loan Program.

We are excited to announce that over the next few months, the RI LTAP Equipment Loan Program will be expanding to include two (yes, 2) new retroreflectometers!

The first unit that will become available in July 2023 is a handheld sign retroreflectometer. This equipment provides a means of assessing reflectivity data and inventory management control. The included software allows for data management in Excel spreadsheets and Google Maps, or just as easily uploads into GIS software via built-in Bluetooth. A built-in barcode reader and GPS make adding retroreflectivity readings to existing inventory management systems easy.

The second unit that will become available within 2-3 months is a handheld pavement marking retroreflectometer. Equipped with GPS, this unit is an all-in-one pavement marking asset management system that enables agencies to have fast and reliable insight into pavement markings for increased safety on roadways. The lightweight and easy-to-operate pavement marking unit, with retractable handle, provides easy-to-use

functionality that provides increased safety with accurate, rapid measurements even in wet and continuous wetting conditions.

We will be reaching out after each retroreflectometer is received with additional information, details of when the unit will be available for loan, and how you can take the equipment out on loan!

Updates From Rhode Island LTAP

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Program Update

All 39 PPE Packages have either been hand-delivered or have been shipped and are in transit to their final municipal destination. One thing we've heard time and again is the question of why the RI LTAP is doing this. Read on for the answer.

During a Chainsaw Safety class, an instructor showed participants how to read the manufacture date on their hard hats. One participant asked if he was reading it right since it looked like it read 64. The instructor not only confirmed it was in fact 64, but he knocked on the hat and it promptly cracked! Others from the same town confirmed their hats were also well past expiration.

This set the RI LTAP on the path to ensuring each RI municipality has access to safe and appropriate equipment resulting in the PPE Equipment Program being built into our 2023 Work Plan. Kits included hard hats, safety glasses, class 3 vests, water bottles, corded and uncorded earplugs, and reusable totes.

The conversations with so many cities and towns were rewarding and truly insightful. We thank you all for the work you do every day and we appreciate your dedication. If you missed any of the live RI LTAP Lunch & Learns, you're in luck! Check out the recordings available in the RI Learning Center*, the State's Online Learning Management System (LMS).

Upcoming Training

Seats are now available to our municipal partners for the below summer classes. These live classes are a mix of in-person and virtual.

In the coming weeks we will be releasing the RI LTAP Lunch & Learn schedule which will resume this Fall, as well as our Fall Training Schedule based upon feedback from the Needs Assessment Survey.



To enroll in any of these courses or if you have questions, please contact the Rhode Island LTAP at dot.RILTAP@dot.ri.gov. Be sure to include the participant's name, email address, and job title.

Is there a training or technical assistance you're interested in, but haven't seen advertised? RI municipalities can now request training and/or technical assistance through Rhode Island LTAP. Just complete this [Request Form](#) and email it to us.

<p><u>Flagger Training</u> In-Person Wednesday, July 19, 2023 8 am - 12 pm</p>	<p><u>Leadership Essentials</u> In-Person August 1st & 2nd, 2023 7:30 am - 3:30 pm</p>	<p><u>NHI 130092- Load and Resistance Factor Rating of Highway Bridges</u> In-Person Sep. 25, 26, 27, & 28, 2023 8 am - 4 pm</p>
<p><u>NHI 134037A- Managing Hwy Contract Claims: Analysis & Avoidance</u></p>	<p><u>OSHA 30-hour for Construction</u> Online, Self-Paced</p>	<p><u>NHI 130053: Bridge Inspection Refresher Training</u></p>

In-Person
October 17, 18, & 19, 2023
8 am - 4 pm

To Register: Email
dot.RILTAP@dot.ri.gov
With Participant's Name,
Email, and Job Title

In-Person
December 5, 6, & 7, 2023
8 am - 4 pm

Available On-Demand Courses

There are currently over 440 courses available for our Rhode Island LTAP partners in the RI Learning Center, the State's Online Learning Management System. See the list below for a sampling of new courses!

If you are interested in viewing these or other available on-demand courses in the RI Learning Center, and you are a Rhode Island municipal employee or elected official, or are an FHWA employee contact us at dot.RILTAP@dot.ri.gov to set up an account.

- *Newly Updated* AASHTO TC3 Courses Include:
 - Advanced Self-Consolidating Concrete
 - Concrete Bridge Deck Patching
 - Corrosion of Structures
 - CPM Scheduling
 - Erosion and Sediment Control
 - Full Depth Reclamation (FDR)
 - Guardrail Basics
 - Introduction to e-Construction
 - Managing CPM Schedules
 - Math Basics for Materials Technicians
 - QA: Introduction to Quality Assurance Programs
 - Quality Assurance Concepts
 - Safety Orientation
 - Shop Drawings
 - And over 20 more courses!
- Dig Safe 101: What you need to know
- Flagger Basics for a Two-Lane Road
- Low Cost Safety Improvements Series
- Overview of NEPA and Other Laws and Requirements
- Project Construction & Contract Administration
- Tips for Improving Your Public Speaking Instantly

Upcoming Observances & Safety Events

July

UV Safety Month



July is UV Safety Awareness Month. While the warm sunshine feels nice, especially after cold winters and delayed summer temps, too much can be dangerous regardless of your skin tone. And sunshine without protection can be downright dangerous both in the short term and long term.

Most UV radiation comes from the sun. About 95% of UV rays from the sun that reach the ground are UVA rays, while the remaining 5% are UVB rays. UVA rays can cause long-term skin damage, like premature aging and wrinkling, and may lead to some skin cancers. UVB rays can directly damage your skin cells' DNA and are the main rays that cause sunburns and most skin cancers. The amount of UV exposure you get depends on the strength of the rays (UV Index), the length of time your skin is exposed, and whether you are wearing clothing or sunscreen to protect it.

Other sources of UV radiation include:

- Sunlamps and sunbeds (tanning beds and booths)
- Phototherapy (UV therapy)
- Black-light lamps
- High-pressure xenon and xenon-mercury arc lamps, plasma

torches, and welding arcs

Fortunately, there are easy ways to keep sun exposure safe:

- Wear a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeved shirt, pants, and sunglasses; Clothing with UPF is preferred.
- The sun is strongest at midday so seek shade between 10 am and 4 pm and remember: the sun can still damage your skin on cloudy days and in the winter, so it's important to wear protection all year long.
- Apply a broad spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 to protect against UVA and UVB rays and follow the manufacturer's instructions, being sure to reapply at least every 2 hours, even if the sunscreen is waterproof.

For more information, see the resources below.

Excerpt from: Weill Cornell Medicine and American Academy of Dermatology

Learn More

American Academy of Dermatology Association

- [It's UV Awareness Month!](#)

Weill Cornell Medicine

- <https://weillcornell.org/news/uv-safety-awareness-month>

U.S. Food and Drug Administration

- [Facts about Sunscreen](#)
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Rural Road Safety Awareness Week (RRSAW) July 17-21, 2023

Excessive speeds are a problem across the country. In fact, speeding deaths on rural roads account for 38 percent of all speed-related traffic fatalities in the U.S. That's over 4,000 deaths a year.

So, we're going on a road trip – the Great American Road Trip!

Rural Road Safety Awareness (RRSAW) week will be held July 17-21 this year. With new federal funding available for rural communities through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the National Center for Rural Road Safety is excited about promoting the tools and resources practitioners need to reach their safety goals.

The overall theme of RRSAW 2023 is "What's Speed Got To Do With It?" Each weekday of the campaign will have a separate topic, all related to speed management on rural roads.

"Speeding deaths on rural roads account for 38 percent of all speed-related traffic fatalities in the U.S. That's over 4,000 deaths a year," said Jaime Sullivan, the Center's director. "This year, we are calling on all rural road practitioners and stakeholders to implement strategies that help drivers achieve safer speeds."

The RRSAW daily topics are:

- Day 1: Rural Speed Challenges
- Day 2: Why Speed Management is Important
- Day 3: Speed Countermeasures for Rural Roads
- Day 4: Incorporating Speed into Your Local Road Safety Plan
- Day 5: Building a Culture of Safe Speeds

Campaign assets include social media graphics, post cards, posters, articles, fact sheets, and other resources. They will all be free to download, customize, and share.

For more information, see the resources below.

Learn More

National Center for Rural Road Safety

- [2023 Rural Road Safety Week](#)
- [How to Submit a Proclamation Request](#)

Additional July Observances

- **Vehicle Theft Prevention Month**
- **Operation Safe Driver Week**
 - July 9 - 15, 2023

August

National Water Quality Month



National Water Quality Month is dedicated to making the most of the relatively small amount of fresh water we have because having clean water is vital to our individual health, our collective agricultural needs, and the needs of our environment. The dedicated month originally dates back to two US congressional acts that passed in the early 1970s with the passage of the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Imagine for just a moment what your life would be like without easy access to clean water. There would be no water fountains (or bubblers), no pools, no lakes or rivers for recreational use, and certainly no drinking water from the faucet.

National Water quality month reminds us to take a moment to consider how important these water sources are not just to humans, but to other inhabitants such as fish, animals, and plants who all rely on clean water, just like we do.

By thinking about the little things you do on a daily basis that could have a negative effect on our water quality, you'll be one step closer to making a difference.

For more information, see the resources below.

Excerpt from: NationalWaterQualityMonth.org

Learn More

National Water Quality Month

- [National Water Quality Month](#)



**STOP ON
RED WEEK**



AUGUST

Stop on Red Week August 6 - 12, 2023

The first full week of August is dedicated to National Stop on Red Week. National Stop on Red Week serves as an important reminder of the dangers in transportation, running red lights, and other traffic signals that lead to preventable crash-related fatalities, and the responsibility we all hold to #StopOnRed. Together, we can build safer streets and save lives.

Why is Stop on Red Week so important?

1) It reiterates the importance of traffic signals:

Too often, traffic signals are not taken seriously by people in a rush making collisions near busy intersections. The purpose of Stop On Red Week is to highlight the importance of traffic signals and the damage caused when rules are ignored.

2) It teaches everyone to avoid reckless driving:

Stop On Red Week focuses on how essential a red traffic light is in controlling vehicle speeds, bringing the issue of reckless driving to the forefront. While it can be frustrating to get caught waiting at a light when you're in a hurry, think about how late you would be if nobody let you make a left turn. Now, think about how dangerous the roads

would be if drivers barreled through intersections without pause. Not only do red lights control traffic direction—they control traffic speed.

3) It reintroduces traffic rules:

While everyone knows the basic traffic rules, it's easily forgotten just how important they are and why they must be adhered to at all costs. Traffic laws curb unnecessary deaths and injuries for both drivers and pedestrians.

For more information, see the resources below.

Excerpt from: National Coalition for Safer Roads

Learn More

National Coalition for Safer Roads

- <https://ncsrsafety.org/>

Additional August Observances

- **Safe & Sound Week**
 - August 7 - 13, 2023
- **International Overdose Awareness Day**
 - Thursday, August 31, 2023

September

National Preparedness Month



FEMA's National Preparedness Month is an observance each September, sponsored by FEMA's Ready Campaign, to raise awareness about the importance of preparing for disasters and emergencies that could happen at any time. Hazards come in many forms and shapes, from weather-related issues to power-related issues and beyond.

The 2023 National Preparedness Month campaign will focus on preparing older adults for disaster and, more specifically, older adults from communities that are disproportionately impacted by the all-hazard events.

According to FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, "We know older adults can face greater risks when it comes to the multitude of extreme weather events and emergencies we now face, especially if they are living alone, are low-income, have a disability, or live in rural areas. Through our Ready Campaign, FEMA is evolving the way we engage with communities to be more inclusive and impactful than ever before, which includes meeting older adults where they are and getting them the preparedness resources, they need and deserve."

According to the American Red Cross, there are several factors that make older adults more vulnerable after disasters, including:

- Greater likelihood to suffer from chronic conditions and the need for associated medications
- Greater reliance on assistive devices such as walkers or glasses, as well as support from caregivers and others
- Increased likelihood of social isolation

For more information, messaging, and graphics see the resources below.

Excerpt from: FEMA, Ready Campaign, National Weather Service

Learn More

Ready Campaign

- [National Preparedness Month](#)
- [Older Adults](#)
- [People with Disabilities](#)
- [Family Emergency Planning](#)

- [Prepare Your Pets for Disasters](#)

FEMA

- [FEMA Administrator Announces 2023 National Preparedness Month Theme](#)
- [Complete List of Natural Disasters/National Tragedies](#)

National Weather Service

- [Rhode Island SKYWARN® Program](#)
- [September is National Preparedness Month!](#)
- [Hazardous Weather Awareness and Preparedness Information](#)

American Red Cross

- [New Research: Older Adults More Vulnerable after Disasters](#)
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Concussion Awareness Day Friday, September 15, 2023

National Concussion Awareness Day, observed on the third Friday in September annually, was founded in 2016 by Brooke Mills, who as a freshman in high school, suffered a concussion. Concussions have become an epidemic in the United States, with millions of mild traumatic brain injuries happening each year.

The purpose of National Concussion Awareness Day is to create an opportunity for public discussion of this issue nationally and show support for those suffering. By raising awareness of the importance of recognizing a concussion, treating it appropriately, and supporting the injured we can positively impact lives across the country.

National Concussion Awareness Day® is a chance for healthcare practitioners, teachers, coaches, parents, and the public to connect and discuss baseline testing, signs and symptoms, and the social and emotional issues that can result from mild traumatic brain injury. Healthcare professionals, non-profit organizations, and support groups from across the United States will be participating in the seventh annual National Concussion Awareness Day ® on Friday, September 15, 2023.

National Concussion Awareness Day has also been recognized by the United States Congress. In 2019 a bipartisan resolution was introduced in the United States Senate by Senators Maggie Hassan and Shelley Moore Capito recognizing September 20, 2019, as National Concussion Awareness Day. The resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives by Congressman Bill Pascrell and Don Bacon.

For more information, see the resources below.

Excerpt from: National Concussion Awareness Day®

Learn More

National Concussion Awareness Day

- [National Concussion Awareness Day® Friday, September 15th](#)

Concussion . Org

- [Secure Your Load Background](#)

Concussion Awareness Now

- [Don't Mess with Your 'Melon' - New PSA from Abbott and the Brain Injury Association of America](#)
- [Be a Rebel. If you hit your head, get it checked](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [CDC HEADS UP Campaign](#)

- [Get the Facts About TBI](#)

Additional September Observances

- **National Farm Safety and Health Week**
 - September 17 - 23, 2023
- **Child Passenger Safety Week**
 - September 17 - 23, 2023

Rhode Island Local Technical Assistance Program

Rhode Island Department of Transportation

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