

# Commercial & Facilities

Fire Protection · Paving · Facilities Services · Security Systems · Elevator · Venue & Catering

Six trades, one publication. Every item is something that moves a number on your P&L, changes what you must do by law, or changes what parts and labor cost you.

|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>IN THIS ISSUE</b> | <b>FIRE PROTECTION</b><br><b>The National Fire Sprinkler Association asked the administration on August 25 to lift Canadian tariffs on fire pumps and controllers, citing escalation risk up to 50%</b> | <b>PAVING</b><br><b>Missouri's posted asphalt cement price index rose to \$631.25 for August 2026 from the \$605.00 it held in June and July, and is up 29.8% since January</b>               | <b>FACILITIES SERVICES</b><br><b>The Service Contract Act health and welfare fringe rate rose to \$5.92 an hour on August 10, 2026, from \$5.55, a 37-cent increase on every hour worked</b> | <br><b>Read it online</b><br>This issue, and every one before it |
|                      | <b>SECURITY SYSTEMS</b><br><b>The FCC published a proposal on August 7, 2026 to bar equipment authorization for any device containing a Covered List component, with comments due September 8</b>       | <b>ELEVATOR</b><br><b>Otis reported modernization backlog up 24% and new equipment orders down 5% for the second quarter of 2026 — elevator money has moved to buildings already standing</b> | <b>VENUE &amp; CATERING</b><br><b>USDA put its 2026 beef and veal price forecast at 9.8% on August 25, with food away from home up 3.6% and all food up 3.0%</b>                             |                                                                                                                                                     |
|                      | <b>BACKGROUND SIGNAL</b><br><b>The invoice fraud that reads your email first</b>                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                     |

## SUPPLY · EVERY TRADE IN THIS ISSUE

## A 50% additional duty on 554 lines of Canadian goods — cement, plastics, adhesives, machinery, electrical equipment and carpet among them — took effect August 22.

A 50% additional ad valorem duty on Canadian goods took effect at 12:01 a.m. on August 22, 2026, under three Section 338 proclamations signed July 20 and published July 23. Customs and Border Protection issued entry guidance the night before, in CSMS message 69606660, directing filers to new Chapter 99 headings 9903.03.12 through 9903.03.14 for covered goods. The duty stacks on top of ordinary customs duties, other trade remedies and antidumping or countervailing duties. USMCA origin does not exempt a covered good.

The proclamations are named for dairy, alcohol and motor vehicles, but the annexes run to roughly 554 eight-digit subheadings. Coverage reported by customs advisers includes cement, plastics and plastic fittings and floor coverings, adhesives and waxes, machinery, pumps, hand tools, electrical and telecommunications equipment, printed circuit boards, textiles, yarns and carpets. Heading 9903.03.15 carries a 0% rate for steel, aluminum and copper articles, vehicles, wood, semiconductors and patented pharmaceuticals, which sit under Section 232 instead.

The date moved twice. The original effective date was August 19. A proclamation signed August 18 suspended the duties for three days while negotiations continued, and CBP refunded anything collected in that window. No deal followed, so collection began August 22. Energy products, potash, fish and certain critical minerals are excluded, as are qualifying civil aircraft articles. Goods entering a

foreign trade zone must be admitted under privileged foreign status, not domestic status.

Canada has published its answer. Countermeasures on about \$27.6 billion in imports from the U.S. take effect at 12:01 a.m. on September 8, 2026, at 15%, 25% and 50% rates set to match the U.S. rate on the same goods, covering steel products, appliances, agricultural equipment, electronics, pulp and paper, textiles and wood. Goods already in transit are exempt. On August 25 the National Fire Sprinkler Association asked the administration to lift the Canadian tariffs on fire pumps and their controllers.

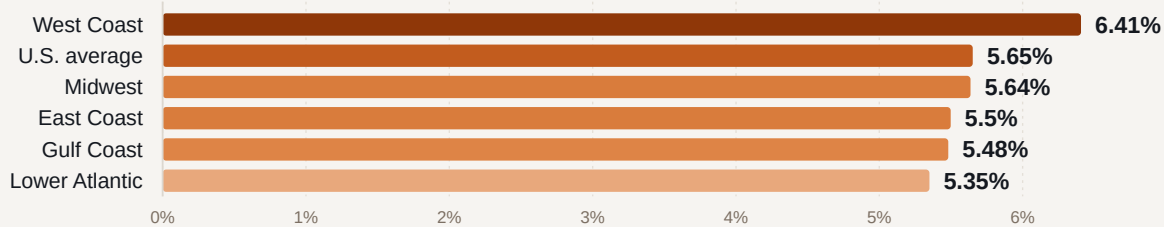
**What to do about it:** Pull every open purchase order and quote with a Canadian country of origin and get the eight-digit HTS classification from the supplier in writing this week — the proclamation annexes, not the product description, decide whether you owe 50%. Have your customs broker confirm whether each line falls under 9903.03.12 through .14 at 50% or 9903.03.15 and .16 at 0%; a USMCA certificate does not help here. Reprice any fixed-price bid still open that carries Canadian cement, plastic pipe and fittings, adhesives, carpet, hand tools, electrical gear or pumps, and cut bid validity to 14 to 30 days. Put a tariff-escalation clause in every new agreement that names the specific duty program rather than saying "tariffs." If you ship anything north, check September and October deliveries against Canada's September 8 list.

CSMS #69606660 - Guidance: Section 338 Additional Duties on Certain Goods of Canada (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, August 21, 2026) · Proclamation 11048, Imposing Additional Duties To Offset Canadian Discrimination Against the Commerce of the United States With Respect to Motor Vehicles (Federal Register, July 23, 2026) · List of products from the United States subject to counter-tariffs effective September 8, 2026 (Department of Finance Canada)

## INFOGRAPHIC 1 / FUEL COSTS

### Diesel set a 2026 high in the last week of August, and the West Coast runs almost a dollar above the Gulf

Retail on-highway diesel, all types, dollars per gallon including taxes, week ending August 24, 2026, EIA weekly retail survey



The national average rose 19.8 cents in a single week to \$5.652, after 19.7 cents the week before, and sits \$1.944 — about 52% — above the same week in 2025. Every truck roll, paving haul, sweeper route and catering van is priced off this line. A fuel surcharge tied to a spring number is now roughly a dollar a gallon short. Source: [Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of August 24, 2026, U.S. Energy Information Administration](#)

## FIRE PROTECTION

TWO ITEMS

### SUPPLY

The National Fire Sprinkler Association asked the administration on August 25 to lift Canadian tariffs on fire pumps and controllers, citing escalation risk up to 50%

**Why it matters:** NFSA asked the administration on August 25, 2026 to lift tariffs on Canadian fire and life safety products, naming fire pump controllers — the "brains" of a fire pump — and the makers its members buy from: Eaton, Tornatech, Peerless Pumps, SPP Pumps and Armstrong Pumps. It cites escalation risk "up to 50%" and tariffs "issued this week," matching the 50% Section 338 duty that began August 22. This is a request, not relief; no exclusion process has been announced. Contractors with fire pump packages on order or quoted are exposed; sprinkler pipe is not, because steel articles sit in the 0% carve-out. Call your pump vendor this week for country of origin and the HTS code on every controller in your backlog, and re-confirm quoted pump prices in writing before you sign.

National Fire Sprinkler Association Urges Tariff Relief on Fire & Life Safety Components (GlobeNewswire, August 25, 2026) · CSMS #69606660 - Guidance: Section 338 Additional Duties on Certain Goods of Canada (U.S. Customs and Border Protection, August 21, 2026)

### REGULATION

The 2026 edition of NFPA 25 moves hose valve inspections from annual to quarterly, adds a quarterly solenoid test, and requires annual internal inspection of preaction and deluge valves

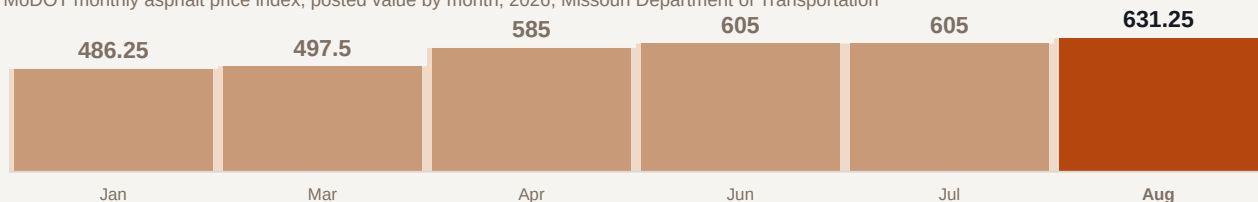
**Why it matters:** The 2026 edition of NFPA 25 changes the inspection frequencies your service contracts are priced on. Hose valve inspections move from annual to quarterly. Praction and deluge valves need an annual internal inspection, ending the five-year allowance for resettable designs. Solenoid coils on electric actuators get a quarterly supervisory test. The hydrostatic-test exemption for short fire department connection piping widens from 4 to 10 feet. Dwelling-unit sprinklers installed 50 years ago must be replaced with fast-response heads or sample-tested. A frozen system is now impaired, not deficient. Adoption is jurisdiction by jurisdiction. Ask your fire marshal which edition is enforced, then price quarterly hose valve visits into your contract before renewal.

What's Changing in NFPA 25: Key Updates from the 2026 Edition (International Fire Suppression Alliance, April 7, 2026) · What the 2026 Edition of NFPA 25 Means for Fire Sprinkler Inspections (Chesapeake Sprinkler Company, July 24, 2026)

## INFOGRAPHIC 2 / ASPHALT INDEX

### Missouri's posted asphalt cement price sat flat all summer, then moved again in August

MoDOT monthly asphalt price index, posted value by month, 2026, Missouri Department of Transportation



The index held at \$605.00 through June and July, then moved 4.3% to \$631.25 in August — the first change since April and the fourth increase of 2026, leaving it 29.8% above January. DOT contracts with an adjustment clause pass this through; fixed-price private paving does not. MoDOT publishes no unit, so read it as a percentage move, not a per-ton price. Source: [Asphalt Price Index, Missouri Department of Transportation](#)

## PAVING

TWO ITEMS

### SUPPLY

Missouri's posted asphalt cement price index rose to \$631.25 for August 2026 from the \$605.00 it held in June and July, and is up 29.8% since January

**Why it matters:** MoDOT's monthly asphalt price index, a common private escalation reference, posted \$631.25 for August 2026 — up 4.3% from the \$605.00 it held in June and July, and 29.8% above January's \$486.25. The 2026 series runs \$486.25 in January, \$481.25 in February, \$497.50 in March, \$585.00 in April and May, \$605.00 in June and July, and \$631.25 in August. That is the fourth increase of 2026 and the first move since April. DOT contracts with an asphalt cement adjustment clause pass it through; fixed-price private paving, parking lot and sealcoat work absorbs all of it. MoDOT publishes no unit, so read it as a percentage move, not a per-ton price. Reprice every private quote written before August, and tie new agreements to your state DOT's published monthly index.

Asphalt Price Index (Missouri Department of Transportation)

### MONEY

On-highway diesel averaged \$5.652 a gallon nationally on August 24, 2026, up 19.8 cents in a week and \$1.944 — about 52% — above the same week a year earlier

**Why it matters:** EIA's weekly survey put the U.S. average on-highway diesel price at \$5.652 a gallon on August 24, 2026, up 19.8 cents from the prior week, which was itself up 19.7 cents, and \$1.944 above the same week in 2025 — roughly 52% year over year and a new 2026 high. The national series ran \$5.134 on July 20, \$5.313 on July 27, \$5.348 on August 3, \$5.257 on August 10 and \$5.454 on August 17. The West Coast averaged \$6.407, the Midwest \$5.636, the East Coast \$5.498, the Gulf Coast \$5.481 and the Lower Atlantic \$5.350. Paving burns fuel twice, hauling mix and running rollers, so any bid priced on a spring fuel assumption is now under-costed. Add a fuel surcharge tied to the published EIA weekly number to every new hauling and paving agreement this week.

Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of August 24, 2026 (U.S. Energy Information Administration) · Diesel prices surge to new 2026 high (Overdrive, August 2026)

## FACILITIES SERVICES

TWO ITEMS

### LABOR

The Service Contract Act health and welfare fringe rate rose to \$5.92 an hour on August 10, 2026, from \$5.55, a 37-cent increase on every hour worked

**Why it matters:** The Labor Department's All Agency Memorandum 252, dated August 10, 2026, set the Service Contract Act health and welfare fringe at \$5.92 an hour, up from \$5.55. The Executive Order 13706 paid-sick-leave rate rises to \$5.42 from \$5.09, and Hawaii's rates are \$2.51 and \$2.01. On a 2,080-hour year, 37 cents is roughly \$770 per full-time employee before payroll taxes. It hits janitorial, grounds, O&M and guard services under federal contracts, but does not bite until a wage determination carrying the rate is incorporated into your contract, so exposure lands at option-year exercise or modification. Check every federal contract for a price-adjustment clause now. DC's security officer minimum wage fringe tracks the federal Guard 1 rate, so the District's number moves next.

All Agency Memoranda, AAM 252: 2026 Service Contract Act Health and Welfare Fringe Benefit (SAM.gov Wage Determinations, August 10, 2026) · 2026 Newly Increased Health and Welfare Rates on SCA Government Contracts (PiliroMazza, August 17, 2026)

## SECURITY SYSTEMS

TWO ITEMS

### REGULATION

The FCC published a proposal on August 7, 2026 to bar equipment authorization for any device containing a Covered List component, with comments due September 8

**Why it matters:** The FCC adopted a Third Report and Order and Third Further Notice in ET Docket 21-232 on July 22, 2026, releasing them July 23. The order bars equipment authorization for devices with logic-bearing hardware from Covered List entities — Hikvision and Dahua video surveillance gear among them — effective 30 days after Federal Register publication. It is prospective only, leaves previously authorized equipment alone, and exempts applications pending on the effective date. The Further Notice, published August 7, 2026, asks whether to extend the bar to any Covered List component or adopt a rebuttable presumption against authorization. Comments are due September 8, replies September 21. Ask each camera and intercom manufacturer in writing which lines are affected.

Protecting Against National Security Threats to the Communications Supply Chain through the Equipment Authorization Program, proposed rule (Federal Register, August 7, 2026) · FCC 26-50, Third Report and Order and Third Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, ET Docket 21-232 (Federal Communications Commission, released July 23, 2026)

## ELEVATOR

TWO ITEMS

### DEMAND

Otis reported modernization backlog up 24% and new equipment orders down 5% for the second quarter of 2026 — elevator money has moved to buildings already standing

**Why it matters:** Otis's second-quarter 2026 results, released July 22, 2026, show where elevator revenue is. Modernization organic sales and backlog each rose 24%, backlog 26% at constant currency, with orders up 9%. Maintenance and repair organic sales rose 6%. New equipment went the other way: organic sales down 1% and orders down 5% at constant currency, with a high-teens decline in China and a mid-single-digit decline in EMEA offsetting roughly 10% organic growth in the Americas. Service net sales reached \$2.6 billion, up 11%, against \$1.3 billion and flat in new equipment. For an independent service contractor, that argues for modernization proposals and route density, not new-construction bids. Price modernization work off current labor and material rates, not last year's.

Otis Reports Second Quarter 2026 Results (Otis Worldwide, July 22, 2026) · Otis Reports Second Quarter 2026 Results (PR Newswire, July 22, 2026)

### INSURANCE

Commercial property premiums fell 6.3% in the second quarter of 2026, the steepest property drop since 2010, while umbrella rose 5.3% and commercial auto 4.5%

**Why it matters:** The Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers' second-quarter 2026 P&C Market Survey, published August 20, 2026, found premiums across all account sizes fell 2.0%, after a 1.2% first-quarter decline. Commercial property fell 6.3%, the largest quarterly drop since the second quarter of 2010, and workers' compensation fell 3.2%. Umbrella rose 5.3% and commercial auto 4.5%. Large accounts fell 3.7%, medium 1.9% and small just 0.5%; small buyers get the least of the softening. If you own buildings or carry a heavy property schedule, shop the market rather than roll it; if your exposure is fleet and umbrella over subcontracted janitorial, landscaping or guarding crews, budget an increase. Start property renewals 90 to 120 days out and make the broker market the placement.

CIAB Survey: Overall Soft Market Conditions Continue in Q2 (Insurance Journal, August 20, 2026) · Q2 2026 P&C Market Index: Soft Market Leads to Second Quarter of Declines (UNICO Group)

### SUPPLY

Forced-labor Section 301 tariffs of 10% to 12.5% took effect July 24, 2026 across 60 economies, and the security hardware exclusions the industry asked for were not granted

**Why it matters:** USTR's forced-labor Section 301 final action hits products entered for consumption on or after 12:01 a.m. July 24, 2026, with a grace period for cargo loaded earlier and entered by July 28. Seventeen economies including Canada, Mexico, India and the UK draw 10% stacked on existing rates; the EU and Taiwan pay 10% net of MFN; Japan, Korea and Switzerland pay 12.5% net; everyone else, China and Vietnam included, pays 12.5% stacked. It reaches 60 trading partners and more than 99% of U.S. imports. Section 232 goods, USMCA-compliant products, civil aircraft and pharmaceuticals are excluded. SIA sought exclusions for 47 subheadings covering security components on July 6; the published exclusion lists do not include them. Requote cameras, readers and intercoms at landed cost.

Notice of Actions in Section 301 Investigations Related to Forced Labor, final action Federal Register notice (Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, July 23, 2026) · New Forced Labor Tariffs Imposed on 60 U.S. Trading Partners (Wiley Rein, July 27, 2026) · SIA Requests Section 301 Tariff Exemption for Security Products (Security Industry Association, July 14, 2026)

### REGULATION

Florida adopted ASME A17.3-2020 for existing elevators on May 25, 2026, moving the Part 3.10.12 compliance date to August 1, 2025 but deferring enforcement to August 1, 2029

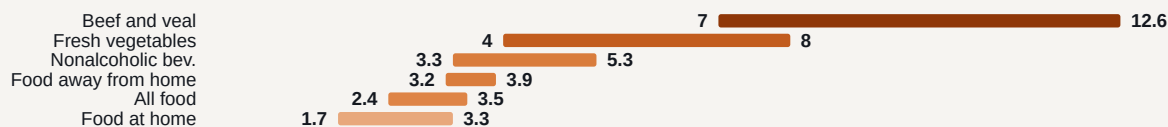
**Why it matters:** Florida's Bureau of Elevator Safety adopted Rule 61C-5.001 on May 25, 2026, incorporating ASME A17.1-2019 for elevators and escalators, A17.3-2020 for existing ones, and A18.1-2020 for platform lifts and chairlifts, aligning with the ninth edition of the Florida Building Code. It moves the Part 3.10.12 effective date from December 31, 2023 to August 1, 2025 — existing elevators must comply — but bars enforcement until August 1, 2029. Four requirements were left out: private residence elevators, emergency brakes at 3.8.5, ascending car overspeed at 3.10.13 and 3.13.1, and unintended car movement at 3.10.14 and 3.13.2. A17.3 is the existing installation code: retrofit work on buildings in service. Quote it against the 2029 date now, not as a change order later.

Bureau of Elevator Safety News Room, Adoption of 61C-5.001, F.A.C., May 25, 2026 (Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation)

### INFOGRAPHIC 3 / FOOD COST FORECASTS

#### USDA's own forecast ranges show beef is the one category that can wreck a 2026 catering budget

Forecast 2026 price change, low to high end of USDA's prediction interval, percent, Food Price Outlook updated August 25, 2026



USDA publishes a prediction interval, not just a point estimate, and the width of each bar is the size of the risk you are carrying. Food away from home is tightly bounded at 3.2% to 3.9%. Beef and veal runs 7.0% to 12.6% — a 5.6-point spread on the most expensive item on most event menus. Price beef packages with an escalator or a written substitution clause. Source: [Food Price Outlook, Summary Findings, updated August 25, 2026, USDA Economic Research Service](#)

## MONEY

USDA put its 2026 beef and veal price forecast at 9.8% on August 25, with food away from home up 3.6% and all food up 3.0%

**Why it matters:** USDA's Economic Research Service updated its Food Price Outlook on August 25, 2026. All food is forecast to rise 3.0% in 2026, interval 2.4% to 3.5%. Food away from home, the index closest to a caterer's menu pricing, is forecast at 3.6%, interval 3.2% to 3.9%. Food at home is forecast at 2.5%, interval 1.7% to 3.3%. Beef and veal is the outlier at 9.8%, interval 7.0% to 12.6%. Fresh vegetables are forecast at 5.9% and nonalcoholic beverages at 4.3%, while eggs fall 30.8% and pork and poultry sit near flat at 0.8% and 0.5%. Protein choice, not the headline index, decides your food cost this fall and winter. Reprice beef-centered packages on every 2027 event contract you are signing now, and quote chicken, pork and egg menus aggressively while they are cheap.

Food Price Outlook, Summary Findings, updated August 25, 2026 (USDA Economic Research Service)

## INSURANCE

Liquor liability premiums have risen 300% to 600% in some states, with small bars moving from about \$5,000 a year to \$50,000 or more regardless of claims history

**Why it matters:** An August 3, 2026 review in the magazine of the Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America reports liquor liability premiums up 300% to 600% in some states, with small bars going from about \$5,000 a year to \$50,000 or more regardless of loss history, as carriers withdraw capacity over claims and outsized verdicts. Forty-three states have a dram shop statute; seven do not — Delaware, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Nevada, South Dakota and Virginia. A caterer pouring in Maryland or Virginia sits in a different liability structure than one in DC, and venue contracts push alcohol liability back onto the caterer anyway. Read the indemnity and additional-insured language in every venue agreement you sign this fall, and get your liquor liability renewal quoted 90 days out.

Liquor Liability: How Agents Can Guide Clients Through a Volatile Market (Independent Agent magazine, August 3, 2026)

## THE BACKGROUND SIGNAL

## The fraud that reads your invoices before it sends one

The FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center took 24,768 business email compromise reports in 2025, with losses of \$3.05 billion — a record, after dipping to \$2.77 billion in 2024 from \$2.95 billion in 2023. Across all internet crime it logged 1,008,597 complaints and \$20.88 billion in losses. Reported cases only, so read it as a floor.

Business email compromise, not ransomware, is the one that should concern a commercial contractor. Someone gets into a mailbox, reads until they understand how you invoice and who pays you, then sends a real-looking progress billing with different bank details. No malware, no warning — just a payment that never arrives and an argument about who eats it. A trade that emails proposals, service tickets and supplier invoices all day is the shape this is built for. The quieter number is adoption: under 20% of firms with fewer than 20 staff use AI at all.

**What to do about it:** You don't need a security program. You need multi-factor authentication on email and your accounting login, and one rule everybody follows: nobody changes bank details on the strength of an email or a call — you ring the number you already had on file and confirm. That covers most of it, and costs nothing. The part it doesn't — how the systems are set up — is the day job of our parent company, CyberSainya.

FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center, 2025 Internet Crime Report — reported cases only, rounded from \$2,946,830,270, \$2,770,151,146 and \$3,046,598,558. U.S. Census Bureau, Business Trends and Outlook Survey, May 3, 2026.

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Inbound text

After-hours

Web / ad

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Capture every lead

Answers, qualifies, books — around the clock

Answers every call & text, 24/7

Qualifies & captures the job

Live warm transfer to you

Books onto your calendar

Instant text-back to callers

Custom intake questions

Spam & robocall screening

Call recordings + transcripts

Booking reminders

Review requests

Pushes every lead to your other tools, in real time

Emergency escalation to cell

Bilingual (on request)

Multi-location

Outbound campaigns

Monthly ROI report

"Your front desk never sleeps."

Reception \$209 · Growth \$439 · Full Engine \$899 /mo

CERNO · DEAL DESK · LIVE

Close every deal

Turns the call into a priced quote that books itself

AI drafts the estimate from YOUR price book

Itemized good / better / best options

You approve from your phone

Customer page: options, photos, plain English

Accept → book a time window

Automatic follow-up until booked

Tech photo line (techs text photos in)

Financing & maintenance-plan display

Shared job room (AI, tech, owner, customer)

Works with your stack or standalone

"From first call to booked job."

Deal Desk \$149 · Pro \$249 · Bundle +\$100 /mo

Booked, paid job

The lead becomes revenue

SEEN IN YOUR DASHBOARD

2 SEE EVERYTHING — YOUR DASHBOARDS

Read-only, branded, one-key login. Two clean views of the money.

CERNODESK · OWNER DASHBOARD

example view · this month

ANSWERED 312

BOOKED 88

CAPTURED 124

MISSED 0

47 calls caught after hours — a 9-to-5 desk would have missed them

CERNO DEAL DESK · OWNER DASHBOARD

example view · this month

OPEN 12

AWAITING 4

SENT 18

WON 71

6 min average from request to quote sent · 71% estimate → won

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## Questions? Reach out.

Corrections, tips, or something you want covered next.

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