

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.

IN THIS ISSUE	FIRE PROTECTION Construction input prices rose 1.2% in August and are about 8.9% above a year ago, with steel mill products up 23.4% and switchgear 12.3% on data published September 11.	PAVING Maryland's posted asphalt price is \$807.50 a ton for September 2026, unchanged since June but 31.3% above the \$615.00 posted in January.	FACILITIES SERVICES USCIS said on September 12 it had taken enough H-2B petitions to fill the 33,000 first-half cap for fiscal 2027, with a final receipt date of September 4.	 Read it online This issue, and every one before it
	SECURITY SYSTEMS Copper wire is 27.2% above a year ago and iron and steel 17.9%, raising the installed cost of cabling, conduit, gates, bollards and enclosures.	ELEVATOR New York City adopted elevator rules on May 5, 2026 setting an \$815 per-device pre-inspection fee, a \$200 missed-appointment fee and a 14-day tenant accommodation trigger.	VENUE & CATERING Menu prices rose 0.3% in August and are 3.4% above a year ago, while grocery prices rose 2.2% - the gap your customers compare.	
	BACKGROUND SIGNAL The fraud that reads your invoices before it sends one			

MONEY

On-highway diesel hit \$5.967 a gallon on September 7, up 36.8 cents in a week and \$2.20 from a year ago, with wholesale diesel up 24.1% in August.

The Energy Information Administration put the national average on-highway diesel price at \$5.967 a gallon for the week of September 7, 2026 - up 36.8 cents in a single week and \$2.201 above the same week a year ago. Every region moved. The Gulf Coast rose 39.4 cents to \$5.754, the Midwest 37.5 cents to \$5.946 and the West Coast 49.0 cents to \$6.987. California is at \$7.764. The Central Atlantic, which covers Virginia, Maryland and DC, reached \$6.051; the Lower Atlantic sits lower at \$5.605.

The wholesale move is worse. The Bureau of Labor Statistics released August producer prices on September 10: diesel fuel jumped 24.1% in the month, and BLS said over a third of the August rise in final demand goods traced to diesel alone. Final demand goods rose 1.1%, final demand energy 4.2%, and the total final demand index 0.4% in the month and 5.4% over twelve months.

Consumer data on September 11 confirmed the shape of it. Energy is 16.3% above a year ago, gasoline 27.4% and fuel oil 52.0%. Building energy is calm by

comparison: electricity is up 3.8% over the year and fell 0.2% in August, piped gas up 4.4% and down 1.1%. The cost shock is in the vehicle, not the meter.

It lands on top of materials. Construction input prices rose 1.2% in August and stand about 8.9% above August 2025, with crude petroleum up 34.9% over the year, copper wire 27.2% and steel mill products 23.4%. Producer prices for truck transportation of freight rose 2.0% in the month, so delivered prices will follow.

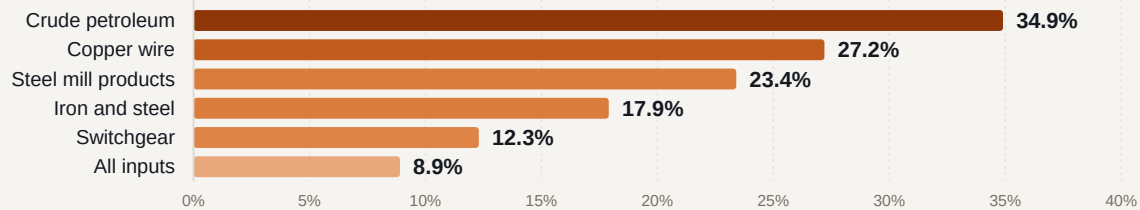
What to do about it: Pull every open contract and find the fuel clause. If it indexes to the EIA weekly national diesel average it is already moving; if it does not, write one now using the figure EIA publishes each Monday, with a stated trigger. Re-price open bids older than 30 days - the 36.8-cent weekly move alone is roughly 1.5% on a fuel-heavy paving or service route. Call your fuel supplier this week and ask what a fixed-price or capped contract costs for the next two quarters. Tell dispatch to consolidate routes and cut idling. Finally, keep the two problems separate on your P&L: motor fuel is up 27.4% over the year, but electricity and piped gas are up only 3.8% and 4.4%, so do not let a utility escalator stand in for a fuel surcharge.

EIA, Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of September 7, 2026 · BLS, Producer Price Indexes - August 2026 (released September 10, 2026) · BLS, Consumer Price Index Summary - August 2026 (released September 11, 2026)

INFOGRAPHIC 1 / INPUT PRICES

Crude petroleum, copper wire and steel led construction input price increases in the year to August 2026.

Twelve-month percent change, selected construction inputs, from the August 2026 producer price data released September 10-11, 2026.



Every line that goes into sprinkler pipe, alarm wire, access control cabling and elevator rails is up double digits except the aggregate. If your bid sheet still carries a spring material price, it is wrong by roughly a fifth on metals. Re-price open proposals and name an index in the escalation clause. [Construction Dive, cost spikes hit bevy of construction materials, September 11, 2026](#)

FIRE PROTECTION

TWO ITEMS

SUPPLY

Construction input prices rose 1.2% in August and are about 8.9% above a year ago, with steel mill products up 23.4% and switchgear 12.3% on data published September 11.

Why it matters: The August producer price data, released September 10 and analyzed September 11, put steel mill products 23.4% above a year earlier, iron and steel 17.9%, copper wire 27.2% and switchgear 12.3%. That is sprinkler pipe, hangers, fittings, fire pump controllers and alarm wire. Contractors carrying fixed-price work signed before June are absorbing the difference; inspection and service agreements are largely unaffected. This week, re-quote anything still open from a pre-July estimate, put a materials escalation clause naming a published index into every bid you issue from now on, and cut bid validity to 30 days.

[Construction Dive, cost spikes hit bevy of construction materials, September 11, 2026](#) · [BLS, Producer Price Indexes - August 2026](#)

MONEY

Fuel oil is 52.0% above a year ago and rose 10.1% in August alone, a direct hit to diesel fire pump fuel and to inspection and testing fleets.

Why it matters: The Consumer Price Index released September 11 put fuel oil 52.0% above August 2025 and 10.1% higher in the month; producer prices for diesel fuel jumped 24.1% in August. Buildings with diesel fire pumps have to keep tanks at the required level and run scheduled churn tests, so that fuel line is not discretionary. Inspection, testing and maintenance contractors running truck fleets face the same increase on every route, with on-highway diesel at \$5.967 a gallon on September 7. Re-price the fuel component of ITM agreements at renewal, and quote fuel as a separate indexed line rather than burying it in the hourly rate.

[BLS, Consumer Price Index - August 2026, energy detail](#) · [EIA, Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of September 7, 2026](#)

PAVING

TWO ITEMS

SUPPLY

Maryland's posted asphalt price is \$807.50 a ton for September 2026, unchanged since June but 31.3% above the \$615.00 posted in January.

Why it matters: The Maryland Asphalt Association's prevailing monthly price for September 2026 is \$807.50 a ton, posted September 1. It has held flat since June, but January was \$615.00 and February \$595.00 - a 31.3% rise from January to September, with the step change landing in April at \$787.50. Contractors working under state price-adjustment clauses are covered; private commercial work quoted at winter prices is not. Check every unaccepted private proposal older than about 60 days and re-price it, and quote liquid asphalt as a pass-through tied to the posted monthly figure instead of a fixed unit price.

[Maryland Asphalt Association, Asphalt Index, September 2026](#)

MONEY

The producer price index for asphalt paving mixture reached 442.492 in August 2026, up 5.0% since April, with crude petroleum 34.9% above a year ago.

Why it matters: The BLS index for asphalt paving mixture and block manufacturing was 442.492 in August 2026, updated September 10, against 421.484 in April - a 5.0% rise in four months, and it has climbed in every one of those months. Crude petroleum, the feedstock behind liquid asphalt, is 34.9% above a year ago. Mix prices are still rising while the posted binder price is flat, which means plants are passing through earlier increases rather than fresh ones. Assume another rise before the season closes: build 4% to 6% of mix escalation into fall bids and get plant pricing confirmed in writing before you sign.

[BLS/FRED, PPI by Industry: Asphalt Paving Mixture and Block Manufacturing](#) · [Construction Dive, cost spikes hit bevy of construction materials, September 11, 2026](#)

INFOGRAPHIC 2 / DIESEL BY REGION

On-highway diesel is \$1.91 to \$2.45 a gallon above last year in every region of the country.

Dollars per gallon, price one year earlier to the week of September 7, 2026, EIA weekly on-highway diesel survey.



No region escaped. The Central Atlantic, which covers Virginia, Maryland and DC, is the dearest outside the West Coast at \$6.05. A crew burning 40 gallons a day is paying about \$88 a day more than a year ago. Price fuel as its own indexed line on every route and every paving job. [EIA, Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of September 7, 2026](#)

LABOR

USCIS said on September 12 it had taken enough H-2B petitions to fill the 33,000 first-half cap for fiscal 2027, with a final receipt date of September 4.

Why it matters: Petitions for H-2B workers with start dates before April 1, 2027 had to be received by September 4, 2026; anything filed after that date is rejected. Landscaping, janitorial, building services and seasonal hospitality employers who missed it cannot staff winter and early-spring work through this route. The second-half allocation covers start dates on or after April 1, 2027. If you missed the window, decide this month whether to raise domestic wage offers, subcontract, or shrink the work you accept, and put the second-half filing date in the calendar now. A supplemental allocation may follow, but do not build the schedule on one.

H-2B visa cap reached for first half of FY 2027, final receipt date September 4, 2026

MONEY

Electricity is 3.8% above a year ago and piped gas 4.4%, while gasoline is up 27.4% - the cost shock for service contractors is the truck, not the building.

Why it matters: The August Consumer Price Index, released September 11, shows electricity up 3.8% over twelve months and down 0.2% in the month, piped gas up 4.4% and down 1.1%, and energy services up 4.0%. Gasoline is up 27.4% over the year and 3.9% in August alone. For janitorial, landscaping, HVAC and pest contractors that means any utility-linked escalator in a customer agreement will barely move while fleet cost climbs. Stop relying on a general CPI escalator: add a separate vehicle-fuel surcharge tied to the EIA weekly diesel average, and re-price route density before you renew any annual contract this fall.

BLS, Consumer Price Index - August 2026, energy detail - EIA, Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of September 7, 2026

SECURITY SYSTEMS

SUPPLY

Copper wire is 27.2% above a year ago and iron and steel 17.9%, raising the installed cost of cabling, conduit, gates, bollards and enclosures.

Why it matters: The August producer price data released September 10 put copper wire 27.2% above a year earlier, iron and steel 17.9% and switchgear 12.3%. Those are the cost lines behind structured cabling, conduit, power supplies, reader backboxes, gate operators and perimeter hardware - the parts of an access control or camera job you cannot substitute. Recurring monitoring revenue is unaffected; installation margin is. Cut quote validity to 30 days, itemize cable and hardware separately from labor so a re-price is a conversation rather than a renegotiation, and buy long-lead copper for jobs already booked.

Construction Dive, cost spikes hit bevy of construction materials, September 11, 2026 - BLS, Producer Price Indexes - August 2026

MONEY

A pricing guide updated August 17 puts a card or mobile access control system at \$1,500 to \$3,500 per door installed, plus \$3.50 to \$15 a month in licensing.

Why it matters: Benchmarks updated August 17, 2026 put a complete card or mobile access system at \$1,500 to \$3,500 per door, labor at \$500 to \$2,500 per door, readers at \$80 to \$1,200, controllers at \$180 to \$3,500 and cloud licensing at \$3.50 to \$15 per door each month. Biometric doors run \$1,500 to \$10,000 and up. If your installed per-door price sits below that band while copper and steel are up double digits, you are buying work. Re-cost one recent job line by line this week, and move new agreements onto per-door monthly licensing so hardware inflation is not the only lever you have.

Access control systems cost guide, updated August 17, 2026

ELEVATOR

REGULATION

New York City adopted elevator rules on May 5, 2026 setting an \$815 per-device pre-inspection fee, a \$200 missed-appointment fee and a 14-day tenant accommodation trigger.

Why it matters: The Department of Buildings notice of adoption, published in the City Record on May 5, 2026, rewrites the elevator rules in Title 1 Chapter 11. It charges \$815 per device for pre-inspection service, \$200 for an inspection appointment missed or cancelled less than two business days ahead, \$65 to lift a cease-use order and \$100 per device to renew a temporary use certificate. When every elevator in a building is out of service for 14 days the owner must supply temporary vertical transportation, relocation or lodging and post notices on each floor. The notice states no effective date; confirm it with DOB and re-check cancellation terms in maintenance contracts.

NYC Department of Buildings, Notice of Adoption of Rule, City Record, May 5, 2026

MONEY

Washington raised elevator licensing, permit and inspection fees 6.51% effective July 1, 2026, matching the state's fiscal growth factor for fiscal 2027.

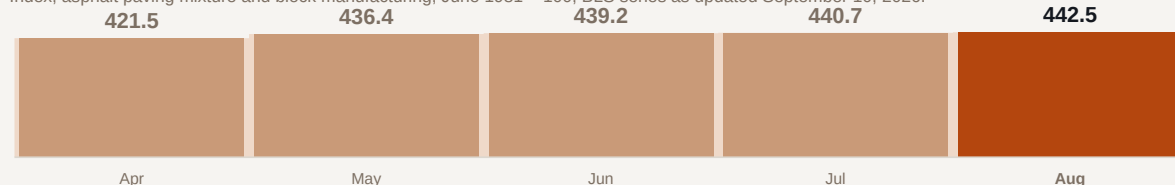
Why it matters: Labor and Industries adopted a 6.51% increase across its Contractor Registration, Electrical, Elevator, Factory Assembled Structures and Plumber programs, filed as a CR-103 order on May 5, 2026 and effective July 1, 2026. For elevator work it touches WAC 296-96-00922 licensing fees and WAC 296-96-01085 permit and inspection fees. The state calls the figure the fiscal growth factor - average personal income growth over the past decade - so expect it to repeat annually. Anyone who quoted Washington work before July on the old schedule is eating the difference. Update the permit-fee line in your estimating template and re-check multi-year agreements that fix inspection charges.

Washington State Department of Labor & Industries, elevator laws, rules and policies

INFOGRAPHIC 3 / ASPHALT MIX

The producer price index for asphalt paving mixture has risen every month since April 2026.

Index, asphalt paving mixture and block manufacturing, June 1981 = 100, BLS series as updated September 10, 2026.



Mix prices rose 5.0% between April and August even though Maryland's posted binder price has been flat since June, which means plants are still passing through earlier increases. Carry 4% to 6% of escalation on fall mix and confirm plant pricing in writing before signing. BLS/FRED, PPI by Industry: Asphalt Paving Mixture and Block Manufacturing

MONEY

Menu prices rose 0.3% in August and are 3.4% above a year ago, while grocery prices rose 2.2% - the gap your customers compare.

Why it matters: The August Consumer Price Index, released September 11, puts food away from home 3.4% above a year ago and food at home 2.2%. Full-service meals rose 0.4% in the month and 3.5% over the year; limited-service was flat in the month and up 3.2%. Regionally, Midwest menu prices led at 4.1% over the year while the South was unchanged in the month. Full-service and banquet operators still have pricing room; quick-service does not. Take one more pass at your highest-volume items before holiday bookings close, and set catering minimums off the 3.4% figure rather than a guess.

BLS, Consumer Price Index Summary - August 2026 · National Restaurant Association, Menu Prices, updated September 11, 2026

SUPPLY

Gasoline is 27.4% above a year ago and fuel oil 52.0%, with Central Atlantic diesel at \$6.051 a gallon on September 7, straight onto delivery and off-premise catering.

Why it matters: The August Consumer Price Index, released September 11, puts gasoline 27.4% and fuel oil 52.0% above a year ago. EIA's September 7 survey has Central Atlantic diesel - Virginia, Maryland, DC and neighbors - at \$6.051 a gallon, up 21.3 cents in a week, while the Lower Atlantic is \$5.605 and the national average \$5.967. Off-premise catering, delivery vans, mobile kitchens and generator-powered events carry that cost directly. Set a delivery-radius surcharge tied to a published weekly figure instead of absorbing it, and re-quote any event contract signed before July that bundles transport and on-site power.

BLS, Consumer Price Index - August 2026, energy detail · EIA, Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update, week of September 7, 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, work orders and vendor 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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1THE REVENUE ENGINE

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EVERY LEAD

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Inbound text

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Answers every call & text, 24/7

Qualifies & captures the job

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Books onto your calendar

Instant text-back to callers

Custom intake questions

Spam & robocall screening

Call recordings + transcripts

Booking reminders

Review requests

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Multi-location

Outbound campaigns

Monthly ROI report

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CERNO · DEAL DESK · LIVE

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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."

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CERNODESK · OWNER DASHBOARD

example view · this month

ANSWERED312

BOOKED88

CAPTURED124

MISSED0

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

CERNO DEAL DESK · OWNER DASHBOARD

example view · this month

OPEN12

AWAITING4

SENT18

WON71

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

Booked, paid job

The lead becomes revenue

SEEN IN YOUR DASHBOARD

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Corrections, tips, or something you want covered next.

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