

ALASHE NEWS

Issue 5

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ALASHE SHOUTOUT



A huge shout out to our sponsors! Our organization cannot run smoothly without their help and all the work they do for the society. Thank you!!



TJC CHANGES COMING SOON

Reminder:
The Joint Commission EC/LS standards are changing in January 2026. Be ready!

Check out the Accreditation 360 page.

ACCEPTING NEWSLETTER CONTENT

Do you have an article, idea or special announcement for the quarterly newsletter?

You can submit it to Andrew Williams at rawilliams@health.southalabama.edu.



TOP NEWS

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A brief message from your AlasHE President

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Inspection/Testing of Fire Pumps

New class opportunity coming next month

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Lithium Battery Risks in Healthcare

Healthcare facilities face growing fire risks from everyday lithium-ion powered devices.

CHECK US OUT:



[alashe.org](https://www.alashe.org)



[linkedin.com/company/alashe](https://www.linkedin.com/company/alashe)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Founded in 1963, the Alabama Society for Healthcare Engineering has proudly served as a professional society devoted to advancing education, skills, and standards in healthcare facility engineering. For more than six decades, our members have helped shape safe, efficient, and innovative healthcare environments across Alabama.

As I begin my term as President, I am honored to build on this legacy and the momentum that earned our chapter Platinum-Elite status for the first time in our history. Our mission remains clear. We are healthcare professionals working together to expand knowledge and advocate for codes and standards that strengthen the environment of care while prioritizing the safety and comfort of patients and staff.

Healthcare facility management is evolving at an unprecedented pace. Sustainability and decarbonization are now core responsibilities, while artificial intelligence and digital tools are redefining how we operate, maintain compliance, and make informed decisions. At the same time, stronger collaboration with Infection Prevention and Emergency Preparedness continues to elevate expectations for environmental safety, resilience, and readiness.

My vision for AlaSHE is to create meaningful value for our members through education, workforce development, and a deeper understanding of the technologies shaping our future. By fostering collaboration, innovation, and leadership, we will continue to advance best practices, strengthen advocacy, and ensure AlaSHE remains a trusted resource and leader in Alabama's healthcare engineering community. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year.

Thank you,
Ryan Hamner, CHFM
AlaSHE President

TRAINING COURSE: "WEEKLY INSPECTION & TESTING OF FIRE PUMPS"

Designed to train facility maintenance personnel, owner's representatives and others in methods, procedures and requirements involved in conducting weekly inspection and testing of fire pumps. This is a one-day class that meets the training requirements for an employee who is attempting to become certified and permitted to perform weekly fire pump inspections and tests.

A certificate of completion from this class will be required to accompany application to the State Fire Marshal requesting that an employee receive a permit to perform weekly fire pump tests.

Visit their website at [Alabama Fire Sprinkler Association - Home](#) to register for the course.

When: January 14, 2026 from 8 AM – 5 PM

Location: Wetumpka Civic Center, 408 S. Main Street, Wetumpka, AL 36092

Spaces left as of December 2nd: 20

LITHIUM-ION BATTERY RISKS IN HEALTHCARE FACILITIES: AN EMERGING FIRE HAZARD

Jamey Greer, CHSP

It all started with hoverboards. After multiple high-profile house fires linked to them, fire officials nationwide issued warnings about their dangers.

Although the devices themselves captured headlines, the true culprit was the lithium-ion batteries powering them. Fast forward a few years, and lithium-ion battery incidents have become a daily occurrence. Residential fires, aircraft cargo fires, restaurant fires, and even fires in battery-recycling centers can often be traced to thermal runaway events within these batteries.

Healthcare facilities are not immune to this trend—and, in fact, face heightened risk due to the growing number of medical and support devices that rely on lithium-ion technology.

Today, everything from laptops and vital signs monitors to surgical tables and rechargeable maintenance tools uses lithium-ion batteries. Numerous other clinical and non-clinical devices do as well. Facilities teams must also be mindful of electric vehicles in parking structures and the increasing presence of e-bikes and e-scooters brought in by employees and visitors—often stored in stairwells, offices, or clinical departments where they pose both fire and egress hazards.

This photo shows a Welch Allyn vital signs machine that recently ignited in a hospital. Lithium-ion battery failures are particularly dangerous because the components burn at extremely high temperatures, generating their own oxygen and making the fire difficult to extinguish. Thermal runaway events

events also release heavy smoke instantly, often triggering fire alarms and requiring partial evacuations. In this recent incident, a Facilities Technician happened to be in the area repairing a door and was able to respond quickly and extinguish the fire. Even so, the smoke forced the relocation of patients to another unit.

Manufacturers are now developing specialized extinguishers and suppression agents designed for lithium-ion battery fires, but prevention remains the best strategy. Healthcare facilities should know where battery-powered devices are located, how they are being used, and where they are being stored and charged. No rechargeable devices should be left charging on unoccupied units or in unsecured areas. Regular rounding, staff education, and updated policies can significantly reduce the likelihood of a fire event.

We anticipate having a Joint Commission representative speak on this growing threat—and what hospitals can do to prepare—at our upcoming Spring Conference.

