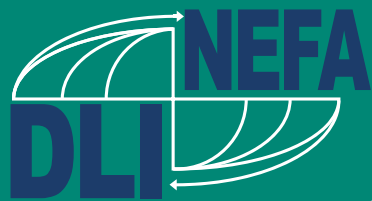


# Headlines & More



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## NEFA's Fall Fest '19 Draws Rave Reviews



NEFA'S ANNUAL FALL FEST PROGRAM ON NOVEMBER 16 & 17 IN WORCESTER, MA FEATURED A PACKED HOUSE AND A DIVERSE COLLECTION OF SPEAKERS.

"This was an incredible conference," exclaimed Larry Fish, NEFA President. "We had amazing speakers that spoke from

experience and shared their stories of success. I absolutely loved it. I really enjoyed learning from icons of the industry like Bobby Patel of Kona Cleaners and Rita Foley of Regency Cleaners. We all have a lot we can learn from their successes."

"I also thought it was really enlightening," continued Fish, "to hear a speaker from outside the industry like Sean Abbas. I thought he was one of the best speakers I have heard at Fall Fest -- or any other industry conference for that matter. His life experiences in developing his staff and corporate structure really resonated with me. It was a very timely topic and one that I am sure the audience needed to hear."

With over 30 different drycleaning plants represented, 18 vendor companies at the event, and even more sponsors, Fall Fest '19 was one of the largest and best attended events to date.

"It feels great when you have an event like this," offered Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Vice President, "and the feedback was as good as it was. I can honestly say I wouldn't really change a thing. From the venue, to the speakers, to the food -- it was all top-notch and really made for an excellent conference. The roundtable lunch remains a highlight of the program, and the Silent Auction Cocktail reception provides some great social interaction."

"Fall Fest is a great conference," observed Carlyn Parker of Dependable Cleaners. "We do whatever we can to attend and to bring our key staff. Employees and managers can often have a much different perspective than me, and by attending together we all learn the same and it sparks some great conversations. I really am impressed with the entire event, and am shocked that more companies don't take advantage of the opportunity to learn."

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER, 2019

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...

### Wow... What a GREAT Event!

ON BEHALF OF OUR MEMBERS, AND THE INDUSTRY, WE WANT TO THANK ALL THE COMPANIES THAT HELPED MAKE FALL FEST '19 SUCH A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS.

It is through their generosity that NEFA is able to accomplish all that we do for the industry. From regulatory advocacy and assistance to education and special programs, the allies that support NEFA enable us to help our members and the industry.

When looking for products and services -- use the companies that help support you and your association. This year's Fall Fest Sponsors Include:

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Larry Fish of Pier Cleaners,  
NEFA President

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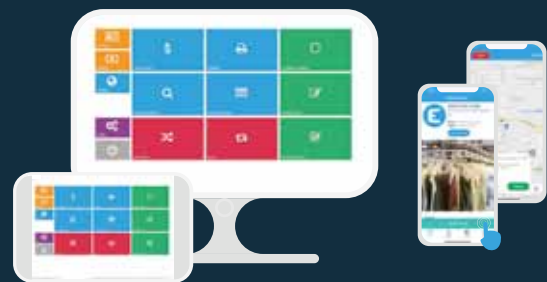
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# NEFA Heads HCDLA and Industry Leaders in Effort to Repeal CT Sales Tax on Drycleaning



NEFA RECENTLY MET WITH TIM PHELAN, PRESIDENT OF THE CT RETAIL MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION (CRMA), AND KEY INDUSTRY LEADERS TO BEGIN DEVELOPING A STRAT-

EGY FOR SEEKING REPEAL OF THE RECENT SALES TAX EXPANSION ON DRYCLEANING.

“NEFA opposed the sales tax from the outset,” offered Peter Blake, NEFA Executive Vice President, “but there was not much debate or dialog in the legislature and there was no room for negotiation. From everything I learned from the people we spoke to, and from the legislators who opposed the expansion, it was a very partisan issue. The lines were drawn and there was very little discussion over the issues.”

Joining with key industry leaders, representatives of the HCLDA, and the CRMA to form a task force, NEFA will be putting together a grass roots effort to try and overturn the recent action. With the legislature in a short session, and it being an election year, the task force believes this is a good opportunity to raise the issues.

“It is very clear,” stated Tim Phelan, “this measure is another measure that nickels and dimes CT consumers and tax payers. This will hurt the consumer, small businesses, and in turn, the state as a whole.”

“There is a fear that this tax will continue to erode drycleaning sales,” voiced a concerned Gail Reiner, President of the HCLDA “Customers don’t want to pay it, will clean their garments less frequently, and will use professional services less. This measure hurts us all. We need to make our legislators understand that drycleaning is NOT a luxury-- It is a necessity. It doesn’t matter if it is complex garments that just can’t be done at home, or the lack of time needed to get laundry done, garments need to be cleaned. Putting more barriers up to getting proper cleaning done is wrong and unhealthy.”

## LOOKING AHEAD

The task force will be using a two-pronged approach. We will be reaching out to all drycleaners in the state to help support the effort by contacting their legislator and/or registering their opposition to the measure with NEFA and CRMA so we can present it to the key committee members.

We will also be looking for assistance in demonstrating the public concern over the sales tax expansion. We are developing petitions for use in all plants for consumers to join in the effort and voice their opposition for paying this redundant tax on a necessity. These

petitions will be circulated within the next 6 weeks. To join in the effort to repeal the tax-- contact NEFA at 603-635-0322, or [peter@nefabricare.com](mailto:peter@nefabricare.com).

## SALES TAX IN EFFECT JANUARY 1

Regardless of any effort to repeal the tax, all drycleaners and laundries need to begin complying with the Sales Tax immediately. While there are some exceptions, this regulation will impact all retail drycleaners in the state. You must register with the Department of Revenue Services and get set-up to collect taxes. This measure is in addition to the gross receipts fee mandated by the State Clean-up Fund.

There are also some differences in how the tax is calculated. Sales tax is a tax directly on the consumer and is collected by the company at the retail locations. The Gross Receipts fee is paid for by the entity that does the cleaning regardless of who the retailer is.

“This can be very confusing,” observed Blake, and if you have questions, contact me at the NEFA Office, 603-635-0322 or [peter@nefabricare.com](mailto:peter@nefabricare.com) and I will assist you in compliance.”

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This service is available to you to provide answers to your human resources, personnel management, and employment related questions.

Hundreds of employee questions arise in day to day business and almost every one of them can be different – questions about COBRA, FMLA, EEOC, ADA, and so many others.

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- I am about to dismiss an employee, what documentation should I be mindful to have?
- One of my employees accused another employee of sexual harassment, what are some ways to resolve this situation?
- An employee wants to see his/her personnel file. Am I required to provide access?
- If a salaried employee doesn't come to work, may I deduct this from his or her salary?
- When an employee gives me a two weeks' notice, do I have to accept it? If I don't accept it, do I have to pay the employee for two weeks?
- If an employee leaves the company owing money, may I deduct this amount from the employee's final paycheck?
- If an employee is dismissed, am I required to pay accrued vacation pay?

\*Special Projects will be offered at a reduced hourly rate for DLI members.



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## NEFA is Looking for a Few Good People Like You!



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BEHIND! I KNOW I AM AND I AM SURE YOU ALL ARE FEELING THE SAME PRESSURES.

I bet the last thing on your mind is volunteering to another group or Board that will take up even more of your precious free time, but we need people like you to help steer NEFA in the right direction.

When I joined the Board, I had the same reservations you all probably do: "I am too busy, I don't have much to offer, I can't help, I don't know enough to be of service", and the list goes on.

Sound like your first thoughts? I am here to tell you, YOU are exactly what we need, and trust me, if you do volunteer, not only will you be a big help, but you will also benefit greatly from the experience. I know I did. Being on the NEFA Board played a

significant role in building Pier Cleaners. Much of my success can be linked directly to things I have learned from NEFA, other Board members, or programs I have attended as a Board Member.

I have met incredible people from all areas of the Northeast -- and the entire country. We have become friends, colleagues, and mentors to one another. When I have questions or concerns, I have a whole network of people I feel comfortable reaching out to.

Through my work with NEFA I have first-hand knowledge of all the programs and services DLI and NEFA offer. Many members struggle to understand how to use the services and the ways the programs can benefit their own operations. Through getting to know the incredible staff at NEFA and DLI I have even more tools available to me.

NEFA is a strong Association and we are well positioned to help the industry and our members. We want YOU to be a part of that. We need YOUR input into ways you need help and developing programs you feel would be beneficial.

We need members from RI, CT, ME, VT and NJ. NEFA also needs committee members who can be from any state. If you want to help and get involved, we have room for you. Contact Peter Blake if you want to learn more: [peter@nefabricare.com](mailto:peter@nefabricare.com).

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## FALL FEST 2019 RECAP...

Continued from page 1

“NEFA really knocked it out of the park,” offered Joel Bien-Aime of New process Cleaners in New York. “I make it a priority to come every year. I am very thankful NEFA continues to put on this conference. It gives me an opportunity to learn from the best, see some great companies and exhibits, and even pick up some valuable items at the auction. There really is no other opportunity like this easily available for cleaners like myself.”

### TOP INDUSTRY SPEAKERS

Thanks to the generous support of our Session and Breakfast Sponsors (**AristoCraft Supply, Kreussler, Aldrich CleanTech, Dark POS, National Waste Clean, and Spot Business Systems**), we were able to bring in dynamic speakers from all over the country.

Corporate Culture Expert, Sean Abbas one the most popular speaker. By sharing his life experiences, owners and managers were able to see the positive effects of team building and learn the importance of focussing on key attributes when assembling your team.

“Sean’s talk was unique,” observed Blake, “it is rare for a speaker to be as effective for the drycleaners in the room as well as all the vendors. His presentation reached the entire room.”

Rita Foley of Regency Cleaners in NC was able to show effective ways to diversify and capture the wash-dry-fold market.

“There can be a lot of resistance to change,” cautioned Blake, “but Rita was able to dispel attendees’ concerns, and demonstrate the profitability of the service.”

As NEFA’s 2019 Spotlight Cleaner, Bobby Patel of Kona Cleaners captivated the audience. He shared his experiences and explored his best operating experiences.

“He was terrific,” offered Joel Bien-Aime, “and from the largest to the smallest of cleaners we could all take away key points and use them to make our businesses stronger.”

Sunday’s program was equally as strong. James Peuster lead a discussion over maximizing your staff’s strengths. With every cleaner faced with doing more with less -- it was an important topic. You need to understand how to motivate your team.

Chris Allsbrooks, of Zips Drycleaners (and former DLI Instructor) highlighted the important role the front counter plays in the success of a business. She was able to share effective tools to empower your



*(Attendees make the rounds at over 17 vendor displays, Sean Abbas captivates the audience, attendees enjoying the peer-to-peer interaction, and Luncheon Roundtables spark conversation.)*



staff and to ensure they are portraying your business in the best possible light.

With Fall Fest ‘19 in the record books, NEFA is already planning for 2020! Keep watch on nefabricare.com for updates.



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# Blurred Lines Between Marijuana Legalization and Employment

Written By Raleigh F. "Sandy" Seay, Jr., PHD, Chairman of The Seay Management Consulting Firm



NO MATTER WHICH SIDE OF THE DEBATE YOU ARE ON, YOUR BUSINESS IS ABOUT TO MAKE SOME HARD DECISIONS ABOUT THE WORKPLACE AND MARIJUANA USE.

The discussion used to be cut and dry, employees were expected to show up to work sober and to pass a drug test.

But with the decriminalization of marijuana, both for recreational and medical use, the drastic increase in CBD oil, and less than accurate testing capabilities (i.e. did my employee smoke at lunch or is it still in their system from last weekend), many employers are exceedingly confused about what their policy on marijuana should be and whether or not to remove marijuana testing completely from their drug panels.

Even with the increased legalization of marijuana use, employers continue to have the right to insist that employees remain drug-free while at work, that they do not bring illegal (or nonprescribed drugs) or alcohol to work, or use substances while on the job. Furthermore, a positive drug screen continues to be valid grounds for an adverse employment action if it is pursuant to an established policy. Employers that adopt a zero-tolerance policy must make sure that they do not inquire about an employee's disability in the event that the employee discloses the use of, or tests positive for, medical marijuana.

## WHAT TO DO IF AN EMPLOYEE SEEMS HIGH

It is important that to understand that due to current drug testing methods a positive THC result is not indicative of use on the job. Employers instead must have a reasonable suspicion that an employee may be impaired while at work. If you think that your employee may be impaired:

1. Record documentation to support assumption
2. Drive the employee to the testing facility
3. Make arrangements to have them taken home until the testing can be confirmed.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR HR

Employers should ensure that drug testing policies protect the company and suit their particular needs.

- Do review your drug-free workplace policy and substance abuse testing program with a professional familiar with the

regulations.

- Don't stop enforcing your drug policy solely because of state marijuana laws.
- Do apply your drug testing policies fairly and consistently.
- Don't terminate or disqualify someone without careful consideration and adherence to policies, particularly in light of medicinal or "legal" recreational use.
- Do consider the health and safety of all of your workers in the application of your drug screening policy.
- Don't tolerate marijuana use on the job, just as you wouldn't tolerate alcohol use.
- Do train managers to spot signs of impairment.
- Do think carefully about the type of test your company uses and stay on top of developments in the technology of testing.
- Do talk to a legal professional about relevant state laws before setting policies and testing rules.
- Do know that testing policies may need to vary by location (for multi-state operations).
- Do educate employees about the company marijuana-use policy and the repercussions for failed tests, including random, post-accident or reasonable suspicion tests.

The bottom line is that employers have a fair amount of flexibility in deciding how to address marijuana use in the workplace. In deciding how to respond to a positive marijuana test, employers can either draw a hard line and enforce a zero-tolerance policy or they can talk with a job candidate or employee about when they used marijuana, how they used it and whether they used it at work.

Despite changing laws, employers can still enforce a drug-free workplace policy and terminate if a current employee tests positive as long as they have a defined, established drug-free workplace policy.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

As valued members of NEFA/DLI, you have access to a complimentary HR & Employment resource through our partnership with Seay Management Consultants. For more information on Workplace Drug Policies or any other issue, contact Seay Management at 888-245-6242.

Seay Management also has produced sample workplace policies you can use for your company. They can be obtained by contacting the NEFA Office (603-635-0322, [peter@nefabricare.com](mailto:peter@nefabricare.com)) or directly through Seay Management.



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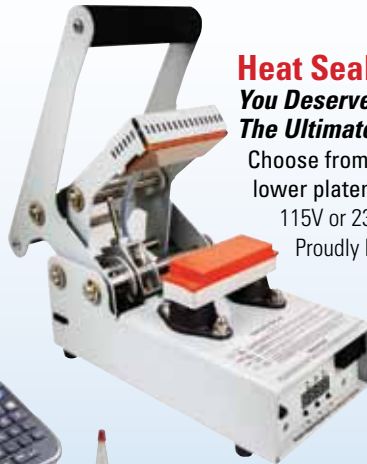
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