

MEP UPDATE

The MEP Coalition brings together mechanical, electrical, and plumbing engineers from across ACEC to share insights, tackle emerging challenges, and stay connected on the issues shaping the profession. Here's what's happening now.

Upcoming Education

Advocacy Connection

Thursday, April 23 | 1:30-2:30 PM ET | Online

Join ACEC's Advocacy team and MEP Coalition for a discussion on engineering practice issues. The coalition sets the session agenda, fosters dialogue on emerging concerns, and ensures ACEC's advocacy aligns with MEP engineers' priorities.

MEP Industry Roundtable

May 26, 2026 | 1:00 PM ET | Online

ACEC's popular conference roundtables are now online, giving MEP engineers from across the country the opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss emerging challenges, and learn how peers are addressing similar issues.



Guidelines for Creating Custom AI Agents

June 25, 2026 | 2:30 PM ET | Online | 1 PDH



As AI becomes integrated into engineering workflows, firms are beginning to develop internal AI agents tailored to their operations. Jordan Meadows (CIS Group) will share practical insights on the tools, lessons learned, and considerations for implementing these systems responsibly.

Upcoming Publications

Progressive Design Build

White Paper | Matthew Strong, PE

This upcoming paper explores how the Progressive Design-Build (PDB) model is changing the role of MEP engineers, emphasizing early technical involvement, risk management, and stronger collaboration with project teams.

Upcoming Events

MEP Meetup

May 4, 2026 | ACEC National Convention

Join fellow MEP attendees near the ACEC Business Insurance Trust booth at 6:00 PM ET at Monday's networking reception. It's a great chance to meet and connect with other MEP professionals at this year's Convention.

Want to learn more? Join the coalition and experience an active network of engineers, its free for ACEC members. Log into your ACEC account and join [HERE](#).

Connecting MEPs at ACEC

Join the MEP Coalition !



We are always looking to expand our network within the MEP Coalition. Visit ACEC's website and while logged in with your ACEC credentials visit the Coalitions page -- one click and you're joined up! You'll gain access to our discussion board, upcoming activities and newsletters.

[Join the MEP Coalition - It's a part of your ACEC Membership](#)



2026 Coalitions Conference

For those unable to attend the ACEC Coalitions Conference and Practice Area Summit on February 26th and 27th in Houston, Texas, we've gathered insights for MEP engineers, focusing on key takeaways from their perspective.



Keynote Presentation: The Oculus at Houston's Bush Airport



Darryl Daniel, the Chief Technology Officer for the Houston Airport System and Matthew Meier with Burns Engineering presented about their engineering challenges and outcomes associated with the "Oculus" at the Houston Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH).

The presentation highlighted the very unique and innovative engineering challenges and solutions. The "Oculus" is an immersive and interactive LED installation suspended between the arrivals and departures levels of the new Terminal E. Spanning roughly 220 feet in a continuous curved/elliptical form and tilted at about 60-degrees, Suspending a massive, angled LED structure over active passenger flows required tight coordination between architecture, structural engineering, rigging, and AV systems. The extreme curvature and length demanded innovative display mechanics to keep motion of imagery perfectly aligned across the entire surface. Additionally, LiDAR sensors allow for the passing airline passengers to interact with the screen's visual content. Interested in Learning More? **[Click HERE](#)**



Coalition Conference: What you missed

DESIGNING THE LUNAR PRODUCTION & OPERATIONS CENTER: AN MEP PERSPECTIVE

Nathan Frymire | Burns & McDonnell

The Lunar Production & Operations Center at Houston Spaceport in Ellington, Texas is a mission critical aerospace facility operated by Intuitive Machines and designed to support the company's goal of becoming the first private lunar lander operation. The facility includes a high bay manufacturing area with mission critical cleanrooms and a propulsion test facility known as the "rocket petting zoo."



One of the most complex challenges involved accommodating titanium 3D printers that require significant power density along with specialized ventilation and cooling systems. The session highlighted key engineering challenges, design strategies, and lessons learned from designing building systems to support the next generation of lunar technology. **Learn more [HERE](#).**

DATA CENTER POWER DEMAND AND GRID IMPACTS

Tony Vu | Principal, INS Engineering

Large-load interconnection requests are rising rapidly across the country, driven largely by the electrical demands of data centers. In some regions, projected energy demand over the next decade could increase 50–80% above historical averages.

This surge is placing increasing strain on grid infrastructure and raising concerns about power quality, system stability, and overall grid reliability. As data center demand accelerates, utilities and engineers are being forced to reevaluate traditional planning and interconnection frameworks designed for much slower load growth.

For MEP engineers, the trend signals a future in which large, localized loads and grid constraints will increasingly shape project design and infrastructure planning.

What this means for MEP Firms

Large-load interconnections are becoming a long-term infrastructure planning challenge, not a temporary demand spike.

INSURANCE & RISK TRENDS IMPACTING ENGINEERING FIRMS

Roger C. Guilian, J.D., CRIS | EPIC Insurance Brokers/ACEC BIT

The insurance market for engineering firms is stabilizing in some areas but remains challenging overall. While Property, Workers' Compensation, Cyber, and D&O lines are beginning to soften, Auto and Excess/Umbrella coverage remain under pressure due to rising repair costs and a surge in "nuclear" jury verdicts.

Claims data shows the highest losses in structural, mechanical, and geotechnical practices, with elevated exposure tied to design-build clients, residential projects, and poorly structured or verbal contracts. A longer-term concern is social inflation, where juror attitudes, litigation funding, and punitive damage trends are driving larger claims and higher insurance costs.

For engineering firms, these trends highlight the importance of clear contracts and strong risk management as insurers increasingly scrutinize project delivery methods and liability exposure.

Roger Guilian works with ACEC's Business Insurance Trust, which provides insurance and risk management resources tailored to engineering firms.

Coalition Conference: What you missed

LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE HIGHLIGHTS

What MEP and SE Firms Are Talking About

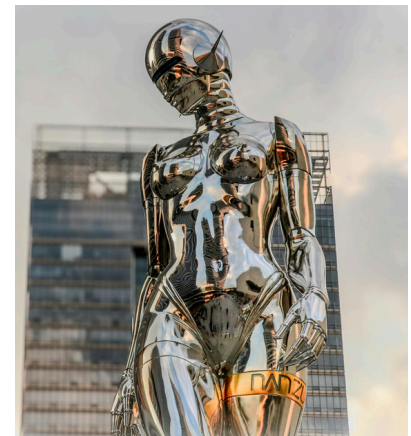
Members of the MEP and Structural Coalitions discussed several emerging issues affecting engineering firms, including AI integration, recruiting talent, design-build contractual risk, digital signature fraud, and submittal warranty responsibility.

Artificial Intelligence

Many firms reported having formal AI policies and are already utilizing internal proprietary AI agents within their organizations. There is broad experimentation with AI tools for preliminary design analysis and internal research.

Several firms noted emerging applications:

- AI-assisted submittal review to rapidly identify inconsistencies with specifications
- Automated comparison of project specifications and contractor submittals
- Contract and document analysis using platforms such as Datagrid
- Workflow tools such as Firmus (recently acquired by Bluebeam) designed to support engineering documentation and review processes



Participants highlighted risks linked to AI tools, noting that public large language models learn from user queries, which could include sensitive information. Companies must be cautious about confidentiality and intellectual property protections when utilizing AI.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property remains a growing concern, especially as more project files are housed on cloud-based platforms and ownership terms are pushed earlier in the project.



Key considerations raised:

- “Work for Hire” vs. “Instruments of Service”
- Whether plans, calculations, and design tools are being treated too broadly as owner deliverables
- A growing trend toward aggressive ownership-of-documents provisions in owner contracts
- A troubling trend described as an “IP Grab,” where owners seek rights to calculations, forms, procedures, and other design tools associated with the project

For many firms, the concern is not just the final plan set, but what additional materials may be expected to transfer along with it.