

“Mother Nature affects CRCA Members Schedules”

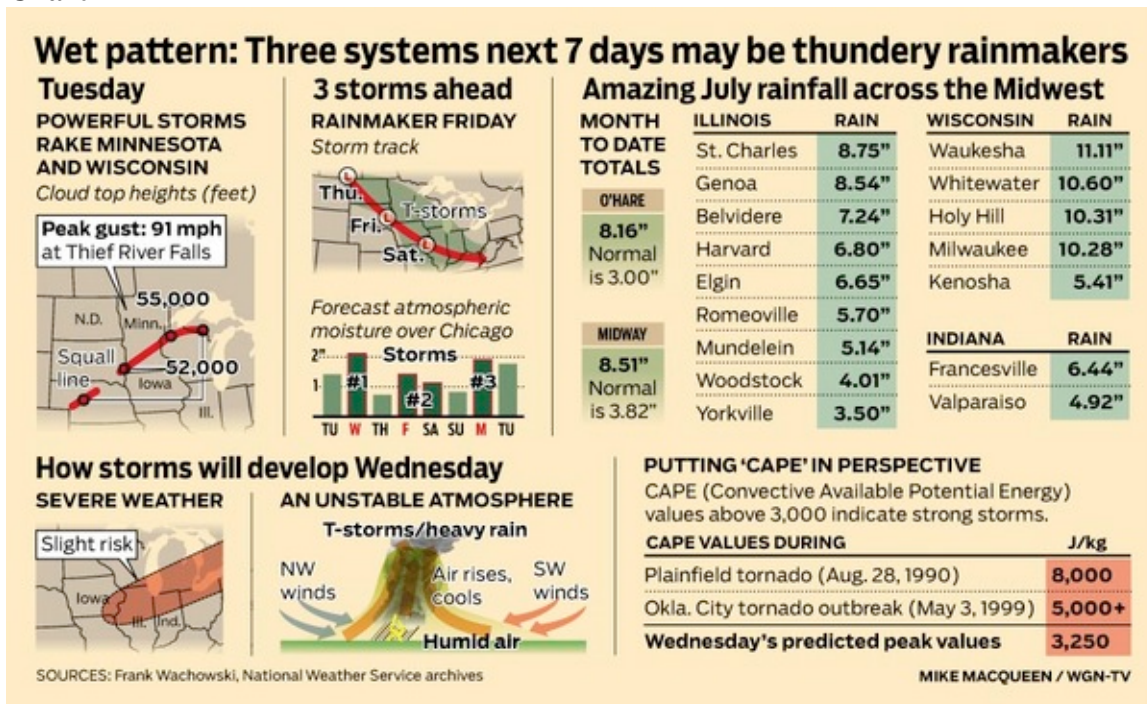
The summer roofing season is in full swing. Roofing Contractors and their workforce are feverishly working early mornings and late nights to deliver great roofs on time and on budget.

Although we’re working our tails off, Chicago’s Professional Roofing Community has been slowed by the weather throughout the late spring and early summer.

The Rains have come in waves this year. Chicago Tribune statistics on Tom Skilling’s pages show rainfall at 8.16” for July 2010. Normal is 3.0 - 3.6” of rain. That’s almost 3 times the normal amount. Intellicast.com shows historic average rainfall average for the complete 3 month period at 11.74”.

Website blog.chicagoweather.com stated “Chicago’s rainfall on track to crack top 20 wettest since 1871”. The same site reported that from June 1 – July 25, 14.33” of rain fell making this summer to date the second wettest on record. And, on July 27, chicagoweathercenter.com reported that more is on the way. (See Chart 1)

Chart 1



Source: chicagoweathercenter.com

With the rain comes heat that taxes an outdoor workforce. And, wet conditions that hurt us from working consistently. Add the wind ... and we're in a perfect storm, affecting our productivity, and affecting schedules. Then, the Operating Engineers and Laborers went on strike, causing work slowdowns due to pickets.

Schools, universities and other educational structures demand that roofing work take place when schools are out for the summer...with students and teachers, staff, not on the property.

Since school ends in mid to late June, and teachers return in early August, that means a lot of construction and roofing must occur in a very short time frame.

For some, it's confusing. Building owners look outside some days, and ask, 'where are the roofers? We have a deadline to meet!



“Where are the roofers?” Wind, Rain, Strikes, have caused the ‘Summer from Hell’

CRCA File Photos

Although we as an industry understand the deadlines, we also must deal with many factors before loading our workforce onto the roof surface to provide the building a full days work. Wind, rain, heat, schedule, rooftop loading, safety, equipment and materials, exit access, are all important parts of our day.

Here's a few of the questions we have to ask ourselves before sending a workforce out to the jobsite. And, these decisions are made at 4am.

- What's the wind? – When it's blowing 15-25 knots, large rolls of material become difficult to handle as they unwind in the wind. Large pieces of roofing can carry someone off the roof if control is lost. Plus, productivity decreases exponentially.
- Rain – The professional roofing contractor looks at weather maps all the time. Whether it's a big screen cable feed at the office, or small screen cell phones in the field, we're constantly watching to see where the weather is. The last thing we want is to flood a building. When rainfall is expected close to 30%, we may make a decision delay operations that day.
- Heat – One of our jobs is to be sure the professional roofing workforce in Chicagoland goes home safe at night. We work hard to create a safe work environment for the workforce. Fall protection, eye and body protection are all critical issues. Heat is another big safety issue for the workforce. Not only does

it affect productivity, it also has other affects. Some neighborhoods where schools are located have rules about starting work in the wee hours of the morning. In summer, it's hot during mid day. If we're restricted to work hours between 7am and 5pm, we may not be able to work full days...only half days. And, with a tight work schedule, that can drive us into deadline issues, for something we really cannot control.

- Schedules – With only about 6 weeks to get big roofs done, there is not much room for error.
- Productivity – During weeks when we work one day, off the next, then back on...it becomes difficult to get consistent productivity with the roofing construction crews.

So, how does this 'Summer of 2010' affect the roofing industry? To put it bluntly, we are having the summer from HELL.

Both June and July have posted record amounts of rainfall. And, when it doesn't rain, it is calling for a high percentage chance of rain or the heat index is off the charts.

Couple the rainfall quantity with mandated 7am work start times because of municipality residential codes and restrictions, and it means shorter workdays. Roofers can normally start work before sunlight if municipalities allow. Chart 2 shows facts that brought roofers grief in 2010.

Chart 2 – Late Spring/Summer 2010 Weather Stats

Rain – 8.41” from May 1 to July 18
Chance of Rain over 30% - 29 days
Winds over 20 MPH – 30 days
Temps over 90F – 11 days May 15 – July 18
Temps over 85F – 21 of June 19 – July 18

Data from NOAA.gov weather information pages

Although both professional union and non union roofing contractors use a different workforce, the Local 150 and Laborers strike caused us work stoppages, and a lot of frustration from professional CRCA Roofing Contractor Members. This has affected the ability to meet tight schedule deadlines even more.

CRCA Member Professional Roofing Contractors will do all they can to meet building owners and managers tight construction schedules and deadlines. With this summer's weather, it is a challenge. And, many contractors have reported that they just can't make the deadlines due to the 'perfect storm'.

When hearing from your professional roofing contractor that there is trouble meeting the deadlines. Remember, the roofing season has shortened due many things; from town mandated start times, activities starting long before school starts, to mother nature's rainy, windy, and hot, 'summer from hell'.

Questions, contact the CRCA Office. bill@crca.org or visit <http://www.crc.org>