



the ExPro EXPERIENCE

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THE VALUE OF AN HOUR

Daylight Savings Time ends November 1st this year

The leaves are falling throughout the northern hemisphere, except in southern California, where we only have one or two seasons and a depressing dearth of colorful deciduous foliage. Still, there's another reliable gauge for busting out the boots and the pumpkin spice - the end of Daylight Savings Time. Most of us spend all year looking forward to that extra hour of sleep in the autumn, when the nights are lengthening anyway. So why do we shave off that hour in the first place? Should we keep doing it? And how does it impact our work?

A brief history of tinkering with time

The original rationale for introducing a seasonal time shift goes back a long way. A *really* long way:

- ◆ The ancient Romans used water clocks to keep time, and had different scales for different months of the year. This meant that an hour could last anywhere from 44 minutes to 75 minutes, depending on the season. Unequal time still exists in some places, but needless to say, it's a little...inconvenient for most purposes.
- ◆ Benjamin Franklin actually did not propose DST, and Europe in the 18th century didn't keep precise time. But as rail and communication networks advanced, standardization became more important.
- ◆ An entomologist named George Hudson first proposed DST, and William Willett proposed it in the UK, lobbying for it until his death in 1915.
- ◆ Canada enacted it officially on July 1, 1908. Europe followed in the years around 1916, to conserve coal during wartime. It was widely adopted in the US and Europe by the 1970s to cope with the energy crisis at that time.

Current events regarding DST

- People in Ontario, Canada are sick of changing their clocks twice a year - a bill to make Daylight Savings Time permanent has been tabled there.
- Many are proposing that right now is a great time to end the practice of DST, because it increases the occurrence of mental health disorders, and we're already collectively reeling from the COVID-19 pandemic.



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DID YOU KNOW?

Here are some fun facts about Daylight Saving Time (and maybe one or two other autumnal topics).

- Californians voted to end the observation of DST in 2018. So why are we still observing it? Because the CA State Senate needs to pass the bill by a two-thirds vote, and that hasn't happened yet.
- Proponents of DST say it saves energy, encourages people to go outside more in the evening, and is good for business.
- Those against DST say that it disrupts our natural circadian rhythms, actually increasing traffic accidents and health risks.
- Contrary to popular belief, farmers actually oppose DST, for the most part. This is because of complications with harvesting times and field hands' work hours.
- Who benefits the most? Retailers! More sunlight means more shopping time.
- In the US, PST (Pacific Standard Time) becomes PDT (Pacific Daylight Time) during daylight savings.
- Palm trees are actually classified as evergreens! So California is a lot more festive than we thought...

Savings? Nope, more invoicing!

Daylight Savings Time affects our work in a variety of ways, but the net effect is that we end up going out to our clients' properties more often than if California was a non-DST state.

- 1) Our crew gets up very early to start work. And we mean *really* early. Work starts at 3 AM most of the year, and in the wintertime we have an additional shift to accommodate our holiday work. So the extra hour really helps on that one weekend in November. Sadly, that means the "spring forward" a few months later goes very much unappreciated.
- 2) It gets darker earlier, obviously, which means we're able to check lights earlier. Since the nights are longer in winter, we also have a larger time window during which lighting problems are more apparent.
- 3) We maintain lighting for commercial properties throughout Southern California, most of which utilize time clocks to ensure that their lighting only comes on at night. That means we have to go out to the properties every time we spring forward or fall back, and make sure their time clocks are set correctly.
- 4) If California abolished DST, we would no longer need to adjust time clocks for it. That said, we'd probably need to adjust them for *other* reasons, so it's not like it would save us a lot of truck fuel!



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