



Best practices for temporarily closed properties

The Covid 19 pandemic had caused many companies to temporarily shut down their operations. The potential for fire, water damage, vandalism, and other property related losses increases when operations are shut down. It is imperative to continue to conduct maintenance of critical equipment, fire protection/alarm systems, security systems and backup power supplies to safeguard against loss exposures that may develop when operations are temporarily idled.

Regular inspections should be conducted, as these can greatly reduce potential for loss for your operation. The following best practices will help ensure you are ready to reopen your business.

INTERIOR BUILDING AREAS

Buildings should be inspected at least weekly for proper maintenance and operation of equipment.

- Continue gas or electric services for heating purposes. Buildings should be heated to at least 40°F or above for any areas with water-filled piping (fire sprinklers, fire pumps, process equipment, etc). Heating temperatures may need to be higher depending on the particular equipment.
- Keep fire sprinkler protection in service. Sprinkler control valves should be inspected weekly or more frequently for water pressure and for unauthorized valve closure.
- Continue electric service for alarm monitoring services. Inspect all electronic monitoring systems (i.e. fire alarms, fire pumps, security systems, etc.) to ensure they are properly functioning.
- Inspect and maintain back-up generators in accordance with the manufacturers' specifications.
- Routine equipment maintenance should include general inspections for fuel, oil, coolant or exhaust leaks.
- Shut off and drain water in systems that are not needed. If water still remains in piping after drained, then environmentally safe anti-freeze should be added.
- Properly shut down nonessential equipment or systems and disconnect electrical and gas services where possible.
- Invite the fire department to tour the facility. Conduct a pre-fire planning session to coordinate emergency action plan in the event of a fire at the facility.

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EXTERIOR BUILDING AREAS

Premises and facilities should be inspected at least weekly for proper maintenance and housekeeping.

- Check that exterior doors are in good repair and the locks are operating correctly. Also check windows for damage and check if locked.
- Maintain and trim vegetation to prevent overgrowth. Also maintaining vegetation and landscaping indicates that the property is being maintained and helps reduce potential for vandalism.
- Inspect roof for clogged drains and vegetation.
- Maintain the exterior lighting and security systems.
- Consider hiring a security guard and/or police department to do frequent drive-by inspections of the facility, particularly during night hours.
- Combustible materials and flammable liquids should be moved away from the building.
- Sidewalks or other areas that have public access should be maintained, particularly for snow and ice removal.

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