

## Facilities Winter Preparedness Checklist

### Before the Winter Season

#### Planning

- Formulate a written emergency action plan and train personnel in its use.
- Organize an Emergency Response Team with specific duties for each member.
- Review all 'Lessons Learned' from the prior winter, and incorporate them into the Team's training plan.
- Gather emergency supplies and store them in a dedicated location. These could include: portable heaters, shovels, wheelbarrows, snow blowers, mops, squeegees, battery-powered radio, flashlights, tarps, cots, blankets, hand tools, spare personal protection items for the Team.
- Develop a list of emergency contractors and vendors to respond post-storm and verify their availability.
- Make arrangements for snow removal from parking lots, driveways, walkways, entrances, roofs, hydrants.
- Remove large trees or tree limbs that could fall under the weight of snow and ice, which could damage a building, transformer or power lines.

#### Buildings

- Ensure that all buildings are weather-tight and close unnecessary openings, paying special attention to doors and windows.
- Replace all insulation after any repairs.
- Seal any openings in exterior walls, ceilings, roofs or floors to prevent exposure to outside air.
- Verify that an indoor temperature for all heated buildings is maintained at 40 degrees F or above at the coldest points in each building - corners at the windward end of the building, at the eaves, and in spaces with no direct heat.
- Identify any concealed spaces, such as the space above a suspended ceiling or a crawl space below the floor that may contain vulnerable piping. Consider removing ceiling tiles, or providing temporary interior openings to allow heat to reach those areas.
- If facilities may be left unattended, provide a supervised alarm system to monitor power supply, building temperature and low-water cut-offs on boilers.

## Roofs

- Inspect roofs for any obvious structural or maintenance problems and make necessary repairs.
- Verify that all roof drains, drain pipes, gutters and scuppers are debris-free and draining freely.
- Evaluate your roof's snow load capacity and be prepared to remove excessive snow buildup during storms, when necessary.

## Fire Protection Equipment

- Have annual inspection, testing and maintenance performed by a qualified fire sprinkler contractor on all fire sprinkler systems well before the onset of winter.
- Test the freezing point of solutions in antifreeze sprinkler systems and adjust the solution strength as necessary.
- For wet-pipe systems, check that concealed spaces, attics, and areas along exterior walls are adequately heated. Special attention should be given to areas near doors, windows, skylights and other large openings.
- For dry-pipe systems, locate and clearly identify low-point drains so they can be easily found. A list of low-point drain locations should be posted in each valve enclosure or each riser.
- Open low-point drains to 'blow down' the system and remove any collected moisture.
- Ensure that heating in each valve enclosure will be maintained at 40 degrees F or warmer.
- Similarly, check that the air supply, from the dry-pipe system's compressor, is cold and dry to avoid condensation within the piping.

## Auxiliary Power

- Standby generators should be test run, following the normal schedule.
- Any routine maintenance should be scheduled in advance of the winter season.
- Diesel engine heaters should be checked to ensure that they operate properly.
- Diesel fuel tank, if so equipped, should be topped-off in advance of the storm.
- Check the condition of the batteries as well as the charger system.

## At the Onset and During a Winter Storm

- Emergency Response Team should be assembled and individual responsibilities assigned. Team members should come prepared to be on site for the duration of the storm and any clean-up.
- Weather reports should be monitored for updates and information on storm damage and power outages.

- Snow loads on roofs should be monitored, especially in areas subject to drifts, such as where a lower level roof meets an adjacent building wall. Snow should be removed promptly if the conditions allow it to be done safely.
- Monitor temperatures in key areas that may be exposed to freezing temperatures.
- Conduct hourly inspections for all unoccupied buildings.
- If safe to do so, periodically open the main drains and inspector's test connection on wet pipe sprinkler systems, to check for frozen pipes.
- Walk-through inspections of each building should be done every few hours. It should include all the rooms therein, as well as the boiler room or heating plant.

## After the Storm

- Assemble the Emergency Response Team to ascertain their observations of any damage and have them prepare for any cleaning and salvage operations.
- Conduct a damage assessment of all buildings, noting any structural damage, any flooding, utilities problems, and any issues with fire sprinkler systems.
- Notify utility companies of any outage or damage.
- Call in contractors to begin making repairs, relocating damaged items to a dry location, inspect and repair electrical, fire sprinkler, and heating equipment, as necessary.
- Have disaster recovery contractor commence drying operations to reduce the possibility of mold.
- Have Team members remove snow from roofs and clear all roof drains, downspouts, gutters and scuppers.
- Once the repairs and damage control are underway, review your emergency action plan to see what worked well, what did not, and what lessons were learned during this storm.

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