

November 3, 2020

Preparing Vacant & Seasonal Properties for Winter

Winter is once again upon us and with that comes the below-zero temperatures we all dread. It is also the time when organizations that have vacant or seasonal properties need to look at taking the right steps to protect their buildings from weather-related issues.

Water damage is one of the most common problems in buildings that do not see regular occupancy. Water can do a huge amount of damage to a building's floors, drywall, and electrical wiring in a short period of time. Water has a way of getting into every nook and cranny of a building. The first step to prevent this is to turn off the main water supply to the building and then drain all the lines completely. Both of these steps are necessary to prevent lines from freezing and bursting. This can also prevent a large discharge of water should the plumbing fail in the cold. Once the main water supply is turned off, there is only so much water that can escape which can limit damage. Once the water is taken care of, it will be safe to reduce or turn off the heat in the building as there is no chance this will lead to water escaping.

The second step to prepare properties for winter is to unplug all appliances. Power surges and lighting strikes are rare but not unheard of. If the appliances are unplugged, then they are protected from such events. Also consider turning off the power to the building depending on its location and the availability of the shut off. It could be as simple as turning off all of the electrical breakers.

Next, go through the building and make sure that all windows and outside doors are locked. This will deter trespassing while the building is unoccupied and also deter animals who may see it as an attractive place to spend the winter months.

Lastly, make sure to remove all garbage in and around the building. Garbage can be full of combustibles; by removing it, chances of a fire breaking out are reduced. Use of checklists help make sure everything has been covered and provides assurance that the building has been taken care of properly.

No one wants to come back in the spring and find out that a building now needs major repairs. The above steps will help reduce the risk of an incident during the cold winter months.

Please feel free to contact our office if you have any questions.

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BULLETIN

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A decorative graphic in the bottom right corner of the page. It features a black and white photograph of a large steel truss bridge spanning a river. The image is partially obscured by a yellow-to-orange gradient that sweeps across the bottom right corner of the page.

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