

Wisconsin School Talk

Building Closure Checklist



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As many school districts shut down all or part of their operations in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19, it is important to take precautions to mitigate hazards associated with unoccupied buildings until normal business resumes. By methodically shutting down operations; reducing or relocating hazards; making sure the building, contents and equipment are well secured; confirming fire protection and security systems are operable and will remain in service; and perhaps taking additional measures to reduce theft or vandalism, you can ensure the building will be ready for full occupancy as operations resume.

Planning

Contact your broker and/or carrier

- Determine what constitutes vacancy, especially if shutdown may be long-term.
- Understand impact to coverage and deductibles for common perils.
- Review policy terms and conditions related to idle and vacant facilities. Ensure proper insurance coverage of the facility during the closure.

Assign duties as appropriate for type of facility

- Assign a single emergency operations coordinator (EOC) and a backup.
- Determine what conditions necessitate a shutdown. Establish a prearranged order or signal to initiate shutdown procedures.
- Identify decision-makers for equipment, utilities or entire facility shutdown. Assign specific roles and backups for shutting off equipment and utilities, and for checking automatic shutoffs. Identify and protect valuable tools, instruments, machinery, materials and information.

- Use diagrams that show all turnoff control locations. Post shutdown instructions on or near the control panels, valves, switches and operating mechanisms of each piece of equipment. Train personnel to implement the emergency shutdown procedures.
- Conduct a general inventory of all company property that will remain on-site.
- Protect or move equipment and material stored outside. Designate personnel to close and secure doors and windows.
- Require reports of shutdown completion to the EOC.
- Test shutdown procedures. If any procedures or steps are missing at the time an emergency shutdown is necessary, document all steps taken and by whom. Update process as part of the after-action report.

Communication

- Notify local police and fire departments that the building is unoccupied. Provide contact information in case of emergency. Provide fire department keys for easy access or a plan to meet on-site security staff. A Knox Box with keys, building maps and an updated contact list is helpful.
- Inform fire department if hazardous materials have been removed from the facility, as this impacts firefighting efforts.
- Inform insurance company that building is vacant. Review and update policy terms to ensure proper insurance coverage.
- Advise utility company of vacancy. Ask to be contacted in the event of high usage or emergency.
- Advise alarm company of vacancy, create new codes and response protocols, and update contact information. Contract for this service if not already provided.
- Provide nearby building owners/managers with contact information.
- Suspend mail and package delivery to the building.

Security and Supervision

- Illuminate exterior and entrances. Use motion-activated lighting as needed.
- Ensure all emergency lighting and emergency exit signage remain illuminated.
- Trim shrubbery and trees, and move signage to improve building visibility.
- Ensure all doors and windows remain locked. Install additional locks if needed.
- Limit facility access (keycard, access code, etc.) to essential employees. If former employees have physical keys, re-key locks as needed.
- Secure basement entries with locking ground-level doors.
- Secure ladders, external stairways and fire escapes allowing roof access.
- Secure entry points to prevent accumulation of dumped trash or debris.
- Provide fencing to secure areas not readily visible to patrols or neighbors.
- Conduct regular security tours of interior and exterior at least once per week. Consider a private security contractor, if needed.
- Familiarize on-site security with fire protection equipment and alarm systems.
- Check all fire protection equipment and controls on a weekly basis. Lock all sprinkler control valves to prevent tampering.
- Continue quarterly fire protection and alarm system inspection, testing and maintenance.



To learn more, please visit ajg.com or contact your Gallagher representative.

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Maintenance

- Keep all fire suppression, extinguishing and detection systems in service.
- Maintain heat above 55°F to prevent freezing of water-bearing equipment and piping, and cooling below 85°F to prevent high humidity and mold. If temperature control will not be provided, install low temperature alarms connected to a listed central station to prevent water damage.
- Shut off unnecessary plumbing lines and drain piping. This includes restroom and kitchen fixtures and drinking fountains. Winterize plumbing, heating and water systems. Wrap outside pipes.
- Ensure sump pumps remain operational and in proper working condition.
- Properly shut down nonessential equipment and systems, closing valves and circuits to the greatest extent possible. Fluids and oils should be drained or secured per the manufacturer's instructions. Use lockout/tagout procedures and ensure that any stored energy is released per the manufacturer.
- Monitor the work during machinery and equipment removal. Use a hot work permit system for any operation that involves open flames or produces heat or sparks.
- Eliminate fire hazards within buildings by removing as many combustibles as possible.
- Plan ahead for rain, high winds and windstorm. Move exterior furnishings inside. Close all doors, windows and vents. Coastal regions should prep the facility for tropical storms and hurricanes.
- Continue regular inspection and maintenance of building roofs, exterior and grounds.
- Remove debris or other combustible items within 25 feet of any building. Have dumpsters, trash cans and any combustible trash removed during the vacancy. Prevent buildup of trash, soiled work rags and other combustible debris around buildings.
- Continue grounds maintenance and landscaping on lawn and around yard equipment.
- Maintain pest control services.

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