Freeze-up checklist

Freeze – accompanied by plummeting temperature, fierce wind and/or heavy snow – ruptures pipes, floods building perimeters, and seriously curtails business operations.

In areas where freeze is common, typical freeze incidents result from change within a facility: not replacing insulation after a repair, or leaving a window or door open. Even a minor freeze-up can interrupt business and prove costly. Planning is the key to prevention, and a checklist will help you identify measures to be taken before and during cold weather.

- Install insulation over water or sprinkler supply piping located in exterior walls, unheated drop ceilings, or other unheated spaces
- Identify building areas that are unusually difficult to heat or that lose heat rapidly. Install a thermometer and monitor temperatures during cold spells.
- Inspect and maintain the building exterior to minimize openings. Fix windows and doors so they close tightly. Caulk, insulate, and apply weather-stripping as needed.
- Drain condensation from dry pipe sprinkler system piping by opening the priming water level drain valve until the water has been expelled. Also, make sure auxiliary drains installed at the system’s low points are regularly inspected and drained.
- If pipes freeze, turn off the water supply and thaw or repair damaged piping. Do not use open flame devices to thaw frozen pipes.
- Pay attention to concealed spaces, such as a crawl space that may contain vulnerable piping. Do not use such spaces to store valuable documents (i.e., contracts, releases, agreements, etc.) If a pipe should burst in such an area, the flooding and ultimate loss of documents could have far-reaching affects on your business.

- Appoint one or more members of your emergency response team to monitor forecasts and initiate winter emergency procedures when appropriate.
- Develop procedures to be followed if you lose heat or electricity.
- Determine which processes depend on continued building heat for safety.
- Identify equipment, processes, and piping that contain or use water or other liquids that could freeze.

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Ice dam information

Heat that escapes into the attic space warms the underside of a sloped roof, causing snow to melt and then refreeze when it reaches the roof eave, outside the area of warmth. Moisture barriers prevent melted snow that backs up underneath the roof covering from entering the building.

Ideally, no attic or mechanical room with heat sources should be directly under the roof. Heat sources directly beneath a roof can cause ice damming and water backups.

Ensure that attic penetrations are properly sealed and insulated to prevent heat intrusion into the attic.

Be sure that access doors to attic space or mechanical room are properly insulated, weather-stripped, or sealed with a gasket to prevent heat intrusion into the attic.

For more information, contact Helen Richards, 800-528-7730 • helen.richards@wellsfargo.com

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