RISK strategies

RISK MANAGEMENT
Winter Freeze Protection for Businesses

If the forecast calls for a blast of arctic air, is your facility ready?

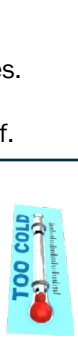
Freezing temperatures can occur anywhere in a building. The most susceptible areas are unheated spaces like attics, crawlspaces, concealed spaces (above suspended ceilings), closed soffits, uninsulated and/or unheated stairwells, and loading dock areas where large exterior doors are commonly left open.

When indoor spaces get too cold, stationary water in sprinkler piping and plumbing can freeze. Because water expands when it freezes, it places pressure inside piping (metal or plastic), leading to cracks in pipes and fittings. This can impair fire protection systems. And once temperatures rise and the ice begins to thaw, compromised piping can release water in a high-pressure stream, causing damage to walls, furniture, and anything in its path.

Here are some ways to stay ahead of the freeze risk:

1 Locate main sprinkler system and domestic water supply shut-off valves. Make sure they're accessible and personnel know how to turn them off.

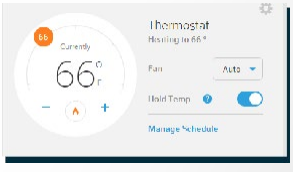
2 Place thermometers in areas where it is diffcult for heat to reach. Constantly monitor all building temperatures when outside ambient temperatures drop below freezing.



3 Check that all building and piping insulation is intact and adequate, especially where construction or renovation has occurred. Seal cracks and penetrations where cold air can leak in. Make sure to close all windows and doors tightly.

4 Ensure adequate warmth is reaching all building areas, particularly where wet sprinkler piping or domestic water is provided. For cold, concealed spaces with critical piping, consider creating a temporary opening to let building heat enter the space.

5 Remotely monitor building temperatures when the facility is idle or unoccupied. Connect a low-temperature alarm into the existing security or fire alarm system.



6 If severe weather is in the forecast (in addition to extended low temperatures), ensure your emergency generator is working so you can maintain building heat. Consider having onsite security or facilities personnel to monitor the situation.

Important note: If you cannot maintain heat in an area with wet sprinklers, consider alternatives such as heat tracing of piping or converting to a dry system.

For more information, contact your Risk Strategies representative or safety@risk-strategies.com.