

PANDEMIC RESPONSE AND THE TEMPORARY CLOSING OF FACILITIES

The rapidly evolving COVID-19 pandemic has prompted governments and businesses to take extraordinary steps to help slow the spread of the virus and keep people safe. As a result, many organizations are being forced to temporarily close their facilities.

Below are some recommended steps, considerations, and tips to help keep your facilities safe and secure during their temporary closure. Note that this is an inclusive but not exhaustive list of recommendations.

General

- Communicate the status of your operations to all key stakeholders who need to be informed, i.e., employees, vendors and key customers.
- Advise your security provider and monitoring company, insurance broker/insurer, the fire department and local police authorities.
- Monitor your facility throughout the closure. In the event of damage to buildings, building services, or production equipment, contact your insurer as soon as possible. Clean or repair minor damage and vandalism as soon as practical.

General Property Conservation

- Prepare for a potential delay from all emergency response agencies (i.e., police, fire, and emergency medical services). Due to the current situation, emergency response agencies will have to prioritize their responses, which could mean fire alarm activations, property damage/vandalism, and non-violent crimes calls will not be considered a priority and response will be delayed.
- Ensure emergency response plans are up-to-date.
 - Review and update contact information/telephone/communication trees.
 - Make certain emergency contact information at each location is conspicuously posted for emergency response agencies.
 - Ensure fire department boxes have the most up-to-date facility information, keys, and access control credentials.
- Ensure security and fire alarm systems are functioning properly and connected to *two* independent communications mediums (i.e., radio, cellular, digital communicator, etc.) that can alert your third party monitoring agency.

- Make sure all building exits are operating normally. Note that according to code, you cannot modify building exits even if the building is evacuated. For example, exterior doors cannot be chained shut.
- Test your emergency communications systems (i.e. SMS text, RSS feeds, auto-dialing, email, etc.). This includes asking employees to confirm receipt of test messages.
- Ensure your technology resilience and disaster recovery plans are up-to-date and stress-tested so that employees can continue to be productive remotely. If you have on-premises IT hosting, frequently monitor your cooling systems to ensure increased IT system demands from remotely working employees are not creating an ignition hazard. Portable air-conditioning units and commercial grade fans should be on hand to provide additional aisle and room cooling if needed.
- Reinforce your cybersecurity protocols with employees and ask them to remain hyper-vigilant to ransomware and phishing scams. Cyber criminals will use the current pandemic to prey on organizations and their remote staff. Related resources can be accessed through the following resources:
 - [Staying cyber-healthy during COVID-19 isolation](#)
 - [Top 10 IT Security Actions to Protect Internet Connected Networks and Information](#)
- Ensure all drainage systems are fully functional, and drain outlets are clear of obstructions. This includes systems in elevator pits, basements, and other low-level areas.
- Work with your custodial service provider to disinfect and clean buildings according to best available recommendations. Current guidance can be found here:
 - [COVID-19 Resources for Businesses and Employers](#)
- Ensure all shipping and receiving operations are suspended or make alternative arrangements for delivery services.
- Ensure all rodent and pest control measures are current and in place.
- Ensure all facility fuel tanks such as diesel backup generators and diesel fire pumps are topped off.
- Isolate power without affecting security or fire protection systems.
- Ensure the building management system (BMS) is fully functional from a remote location. This includes the ability to log in, monitor, and control the facility.
- Ensure facilities personnel have laptops that can go home with them to monitor the BMS.
- Store valuable drawings, records, etc. in fire-rated, watertight file cabinets, vaults or safes.

Site Security

- Use barriers, surveillance, and lighting to deter, detect, and delay illegal access into a facility. Criminals will take advantage of the current situation to prey on properties with high-value assets and that appear vacant and unsecure.

- Site intrusion detection and video surveillance systems should be operational and able to transmit to your third-party monitoring agency.
- The electronic access control system should be modified so that only essential facility personnel have access to the facility. All door and gate auto unlocking/opening programs should be disabled.
- All other non-essential employee badges should be "locked out" until the facility is reopened.
- Perimeter fences should be in good condition. This includes fence mesh, barbed wire topper, and no gaps at ground level.
- All perimeter doors and windows should be closed and locked.
- Pedestrian and vehicle access gates should be closed and locked.
- Contact information for the Security Operations Center (SOC) or on-call staff should be posted on all gates in case first responders need emergency access.
- All perimeter cameras should be fully functional and remotely viewable via laptop or cellular device. If fixed surveillance equipment is not installed, temporarily install an off-the-shelf, battery-powered, Wi-Fi capable system. Also, make sure any intrusion detection alerts available with your video surveillance system are turned on.
- All interior and exterior night lighting should continue to be used and maintained. Light is a deterrent for criminals and helps police surveil your facility.
- Maintain reasonable security guard staffing levels during all shifts to ensure facility security. Consider staggering staff in the event staff becomes infected or needs to care for family members and reassigning non-essential fixed posts personnel (lobby security) to other essential security posts. If a security guard force is not in place, consider contracting a security company to patrol the facility temporarily.
- Provide security guards with the necessary protective equipment and train them on how to use it. Protective equipment may include N95/N100 facemasks, latex-free gloves, and appropriate cleaning/disinfection supplies.
- Provide security the most up-to-date contact information for facility management, information technology contacts, and management contacts.

Fire Prevention and Response

- Ensure fire suppression and alarm/detection systems are operational and able to transmit to your third party monitoring agency. Also, check that all fire pumps are in "auto" mode, and run timers are disabled.
- Suspend fire protection/detection system inspection, testing, and maintenance activities that impair the operation of systems. Only critical/emergency repairs should be completed, and the system impairment notification process should be followed.
- Maintain heat at a minimum of 4°C (40°F) within all facilities that use water-based fixed fire suppression and domestic water systems.

- Perform no "hot work" in the facility unless it is vital to emergency repairs. If hot work needs to take place, ensure appropriate hot work permitting procedures are in place and followed, including post-work fire watch.
- Ensure fire extinguishers are functional and posted evacuation plans are up-to-date for essential personnel required to operate on-site.

Manufacturing Facilities

- If emergency power is not available, turn off electrical switches controlling power to important equipment to prevent damage from possible unplanned power interruptions.
- Safely shut down non-essential utilities and process equipment.
- Lock out/tag out idle equipment.
- Maintain and shut down idle equipment according to manufacturer's guidelines.
- Secure material-handling equipment.
- Take steps to reduce spoilage for existing product or raw material storage.
- Follow established procedures or manufacturer's guidelines for placing idle equipment back in service. This includes ensuring all equipment safety controls and interlock devices are operational.

Miscellaneous Items

- Test and maintain emergency power systems.

If you have any questions or need additional guidance, please reach out to your Marsh Risk Consulting property risk consultant or some of the industry and machinery-specific resources available. You can also visit Marsh's COVID-19 resource hub for additional information:

<https://www.marsh.com/ca/insights/research/pandemic-risk-hub.html>.

Marsh is one of the Marsh & McLennan Companies, together with Guy Carpenter, Mercer, and Oliver Wyman.

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