

## ***Before Winter Storms and Extreme Cold***

### **Plan for a winter storm**

There is much you can do ahead of time to plan for winter storm conditions or extreme cold safety that will inevitably minimize the risks your business will sustain. You will integrate much of the information you have collected in your [Emergency Action Plan](#) to plan for winter storms and extreme cold.

#### **Key points in the plan:**

- Update your [Emergency Action Plan](#) to include appropriate response procedures for winter emergencies.
- [Communications and Emergency Contacts List](#)
- Critical Equipment processes to provide instructions for safely shutting down processes, data processing equipment, etc.
- Identify a hot site (an off-site data processing location for immediate business resumption) or a cold site (an off-site location ready for setup of your own data processing equipment). Also, consider an off-site business recovery facility where you can resume general business operations.
- Identify actions to take in the event of live electrical wires, leaking gas, flammable liquids, corrosive/toxic materials, and damage to foundations or underground piping.
- Identify who is responsible for snow/ice removal from driveways, doorways and roofs.
- Determine which company records are vital and make plans to protect/relocate them.
- Contact local authorities to plan and coordinate activities before the need for emergency action. This way you will both be better prepared.
- Arrange an off-site emergency communications control center, such as a hotel meeting room just outside your area, in case it becomes too dangerous to remain on site.
- Evaluate the interdependency of your facilities and develop a contingency plan. [Business Continuity Planning Process Diagram](#)
- Maintain ongoing agreements with contractors for supplies and repairs needed after a winter storm. When possible, use contractors who are outside your business's area, as local contractors may also have storm damage or local authorities' needs may be given a higher priority.

### **Prepare your facilities**

There are things you can do for your facilities to help mitigate the effects of a winter storm.

- Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing. Running water, even at a trickle, helps prevent pipes from freezing.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected every year.
- All fuel-burning equipment should be vented to the outside and kept clear.
- Hire a contractor to check the structural ability of the roof to sustain unusually heavy weight from the accumulation of snow - or water, if drains on flat roofs do not work.
- Regularly clean roof and gutters.
- Verify that all fire protection equipment is in service.

- Maintain automatic sprinkler protection in idle buildings. Promptly handle sprinkler system impairments and notify the local fire department regarding any issues.
- Monitor building temperature, especially in hard-to-heat areas; keep temperatures above 40°F.
- Remove loose yard debris.
- Secure yard storage of flammable liquids drums or move them to a safe location away from important buildings.
- Use the following checklists: [Freeze-Ups Checklist: Before the Cold Weather Season](#), [Snow Loads Checklist: Before the Cold Weather Season](#)

### **Gather Supplies**

- Maintain emergency supplies. [Emergency Supplies List](#)
- *Make sure to add these items:*
  - Rock salt or more environmentally safe products to melt ice on walkways.
  - Sand to improve traction.
  - Snow shovels and other snow removal equipment.
  - Sufficient heating fuel. Regular fuel sources may be cut off. Store a good supply of dry, seasoned wood for a fireplace or wood-burning stove.
  - Adequate clothing and blankets to keep warm.