



## **Protecting Municipal Facilities – Preparing for Winter**

Although winter does not officially begin for several weeks, we have already experienced snow and unseasonably cold weather. Over the past few years, the MIIA Property Program has sustained a high frequency and severity of losses related to extreme weather conditions – snow, wind, and low temperatures over extended periods of time. As we move closer toward winter, it is critical that we do everything we can to prepare for New England weather to ensure the safety and security of municipal properties. It is imperative to realize this a process and not a one-time event. Below is a list of key activities and best practices to prepare for winter. Many of these recommendations are derived from actual losses sustained by the MIIA program.

In addition, the MIIA Rewards Program supports many of these activities to encourage solid preventive maintenance procedures and pro-active facility inspections. If you have any questions on any of these recommendations, please contact your MIIA Risk Manager.

Below are some recommended action items for winter preparation:

- Schedule and perform routine inspection of all drainage systems and sump pump areas to ensure they are free of debris and blockage.
- Establish Ice and Snow maintenance plans and discuss with all parties (personnel & contractors)
- Establish an Emergency Response plan by building to include personnel responsibilities, identification of key shut-offs, and system over-ride/heating strategies during extreme cold periods
- Test generators and service as necessary for emergency use
- Building Envelope - Conduct Infra-Red (Thermography) Inspections (contractor or in-house) to identify building areas vulnerable to extreme cold penetration. Bolster insulation where appropriate.
- Identify wet areas with possible water intrusion
- Conduct roof inspections
- HVAC Systems – inspection and thermostat calibration
- Check Univents for leaks, corrosion, etc.
- Inspect windows for leaks, insulation integrity, and damage

- Water Mitigation
  - Ensure circulator pumps are operational and free from leaks and corrosion
  - Consider installation of water detection sensors in high risk areas
  - Inspection and preventive maintenance of plumbing connections
- Utility inspections: sprinklers, boilers, hot water heaters, compressors, etc.
- Sprinkler Protection:
  - Installation of grated ceiling tiles in all rooms and halls to provide additional heat
  - Enhanced Sprinkler Inspection
  - Ensure adequate insulation in Sprinkler Room
  - Installation of remote temperature sensors
  - Ensure controls are always accessible, routinely serviced each year and alarms are operational and tested
  - Identify any low points in the dry pipe system and drain/evacuate all condensation and water
- Custodial Inspections & Documentation – ensure all rooms, heating, and windows are inspected daily when buildings and schools are closed
- **Plan for holiday school and municipal building closures – some of our worst losses occur over holidays and vacations**
- Always maintain heat temperatures at or greater than 60 degrees Fahrenheit