

Cold Weather Checklist

What You Need to Know to Prepare

The winter season poses a whole new set of challenges when it comes to facility management. Freezing temperatures, along with snow and ice, have the potential to disrupt operations and affect the safety of occupants. Taking a proactive approach to prepare your facilities for the upcoming weather can help you mitigate these risks and avoid emergency repairs.

The information below will assist you in preparing for the upcoming weather headed your way! Please review the checklist below, prepare for the weather coming your way and communicate the plan to the residents in the facility.

HVAC

- If you have not had an annual service on your HVAC system, consider having a contractor come out to check the system prior to the onset of freezing weather.
- Ensure furnace is ON and thermostat is set at or above 60 degrees.
- Check your furnace filter and change if necessary. This will ensure the furnace works at an optimal level.
- Confirm that heat registers are not blocked, and combustible materials are safely stored. Not next to or in the same room as the water heater and HVAC system.
- If the property is vacant, have a house corporation officer or undergraduate member stop by the house daily to make certain that the house is secure and that the heat is working.
- Call your heating contractor immediately if there is a problem with the furnace and take immediate action to prevent further damage.

Inspect Plumbing

- Check operation of valves and shutoffs
- Make sure the location of main water shut off is known and clearly marked.
- Make sure someone knows where the key is to be able to shut off the sprinkler system if it should freeze.
- Remove all hoses from exterior water spigots/faucets.
- Drain water lines in lawn sprinkler system where appropriate.
- In extreme freezing weather, open the indoor faucets slightly to allow water to trickle, as moving water does not freeze as easily.
- Leave the doors to cabinets that contain water lines open, this will allow heat to enter the area.

Prepare for Power Outages

- Check for exposed wiring and remediate — especially in areas exposed to freezing temperatures and melting ice or snow.
- Make sure emergency lighting systems work properly and check all lightbulbs.

Examine the Exterior of Your Buildings

- Inspect roofing for holes or damage that could cause leaks during snowmelt.

- Clean debris from roofs and gutters to ensure proper drainage.
- Make sure all windows and doors have proper insulation.
- Regularly check the parking lot and sidewalks for cracks and potholes
- Keep an eye on landscaping threats like hanging tree limbs.
- Have a snow removal plan in place that includes walkways and parking lots.
- Keep entryways clean and safe with a deicer solution.
- Designate a spot to pile snow or have it professionally hauled away if needed.
- Ensure lighting is operational or installed in these spaces to improve visibility.

How to Thaw Frozen Pipes

- If you turn on a faucet and only a trickle comes out, suspect a frozen pipe. Likely places for frozen pipes include against exterior walls or where the water service enters your home through the foundation.
- Keep the faucet open. As you treat the frozen pipe and the frozen area begins to melt, water will begin to flow through the frozen area. Running water through the pipe will help melt ice in the pipe.
- Apply heat to the section of pipe using an electric heating pad wrapped around the pipe, an electric hair dryer, a portable space heater (kept away from flammable materials), or by wrapping pipes with towels soaked in hot water. Do not use a blowtorch, kerosene or propane heater, charcoal stove, or other open flame device.
- Apply heat until full water pressure is restored. If you are unable to locate the frozen area, if the frozen area is not accessible, or if you cannot thaw the pipe, call a licensed plumber.
- Check all other faucets in the facility to find out if there are additional frozen pipes. If one pipe freezes, others may freeze, too.

ServiceMaster Disaster Services

If your property does suffer damage, please contact ServiceMaster Recovery Management (SRM) to provide emergency repairs and water remediation work immediately following a loss resulting in damage to your facility. That Holmes Murphy toll-free number is 1-888-927-4877. Upon receipt of this telephone call, SRM will dispatch a local crew to complete the necessary emergency remediation work.

Report Claims to Holmes Murphy

If you do suffer damages and need to make a claim with Holmes Murphy, please complete this [Property Claim Form](#) or email us at fraternityclaims@holmesmurphy.com.

Additional Holmes Murphy resources for property management are available here: [Resources for Fraternal Property Management - Fraternal \(holmesmurphy.com\)](#)

Sources:

[Preventing & Thawing Frozen Pipes | American Red Cross](#)
[Facility Management Company - National Facilities Direct](#)



@HolmesMurphyFraternalPractice



@HolmesMurphyFS



@HolmesMurphyFS



@HolmesMurphyFraternalPractice