Building, Facility, & Property Manager
Winter Season Safety Reminders, Precautions, & Practices

Power losses, fire safety (open flames & candles), carbon monoxide, bitter cold temperatures, snow/wind/ice, rooftop leaks, snow removal, equipment maintenance, and a host of other issues are just a few examples of the safety hazards that require special consideration during the winter months. To assist you in preparation, EH&S has compiled the following list of safety reminders, precautions, and practices to keep your building safe during this winter season.

✔ Inspect and remove snow and ice from all exit ways. Ensure exterior doors and pathways are clear and accessible and free of snow and ice.

✔ Prohibit rooftop access & rooftop snow removal unless the roof is adequately protected by OSHA compliant fall protection (guard rails, conforming parapets, etc.).

✔ Inspect boiler exhausts that are subject to blockage. Accumulated snow and other obstructions can block exhaust vents forcing very dangerous carbon monoxide gas (CO) to back-up into the building.

✔ Prohibit natural cut Christmas trees per Massachusetts Comprehensive Fire Safety Code (527 CMR 1.00). Natural cut Christmas trees are prohibited in dormitories (including family living spaces of resident tutors, proctors, etc. within dormitory structures) and assembly areas.

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<th>Massachusetts Fire Code – Cut Christmas Tree Restriction</th>
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✔ Restrict/block access to areas which have become dangerous due to overhead ice or snow hazards (i.e. overhead ice, snow, & rooftops). Post signs and redirect foot and other traffic.

✔ Restrict use of electric space heaters. Most facilities prohibit the use of electric space heaters due to their associated fire risks. If an electric space heaters must be used, ensure the unit:
  1. Was tested by an independent testing laboratory such as Underwriter's Laboratories (UL).
2. Has thermostatic controls and automatic shutoff features if tipped over.
3. Is plugged directly into a grounded outlet (never into an extension cord or adapter plug).
4. Is kept a safe distance away from flammable/combustible surfaces such as upholstery, drapes, paper, etc.

✓ **Protect sprinkler fire protection systems** from freezing failure or impairments:
   1. Maintain a tight building envelope. Keep all doors, especially large receiving doors, tightly closed, at all times, except when used for exit or entry.
   2. Provide heating of adequate capacity to maintain the temperature at no less than 40°F near sprinkler piping during cold weather. Pay particular attention to piping in attics, entries, penthouses, stairways, under floor areas, above ceilings, shipping, and other out-of-the way areas where low temperatures may be found.
   3. Pipes should be heated or adequately insulated where sprinkler piping may be exposed to outside temperatures.
   4. If you experience a heating system failure or anticipate an extended heating system shutdown, provide temporary heating to avoid freezing sprinkler system pipes.
   5. If you must drain the sprinkler system, a continuous fire watch is required during the impairment.

✓ Indoor fires are restricted solely to approved fireplaces. These must be protected by approved glass or screen covers and ensured that they are monitored for air flow, smoke, and flame/ember hazards.

✓ Additionally, for everyone’s safety please remember:
   - **DO NOT** operate generators indoors or near air intakes.
   - **DO NOT** work on elevated surfaces during high winds.
   - **DO NOT** work in standing water.
   - **DO NOT** work near downed power lines.

✓ Remember that rodents and other pests will seek warmth, shelter, and food. Maintain doors are closed and waste containers are secure and clean.

**Useful EH&S Links**
- [EH&S Website](#)
- [Rooftop Snow Removal Fact Sheet](#)
- [Severe Weather Safety Checklist](#)
- [Christmas Trees Restrictions by Occupancy Fact Sheet](#)