



SPECIAL COVID-19 UPDATE

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PREPARATION FOR UNOCCUPIED BUILDINGS

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In the effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, areas around the country have recently called for the cessation of many business activities, including restaurants and bars, retail outlets, and entertainment venues. This has forced businesses to adapt in creative ways, such as restaurants offering take-out and delivery services. Unfortunately, it has also forced businesses to send workers home – either to work or wait – or lay them off entirely. Despite the obvious hardships of a minimized workforce, another challenge for businesses is that their typically busy places of operation are now empty and largely unoccupied. There are several reasons this can be potentially problematic, such as a fire starting and burning unchecked, a leak going undetected, the theft of valuable goods and resulting property damage, the threat of vandalism, and so on.

However, in light of this recent development, there are some questions you can ask yourself to help prepare for potentially unoccupied buildings. If you are a business owner considering taking steps towards suspending or slowing operations to protect your employees and their families, the following will also assist you in your planning considerations.

Please note that this by no means is a comprehensive list, but rather intended to prompt further thought and ideas. Should you have any questions or would like further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out your Parker, Smith & Feek team, and we will be happy to assist you.

PLANNING

- Do you already have a plan in place?
- Can you modify an existing plan (e.g., holiday closing procedures or extended severe weather closure) to meet your needs?
- Do you have a plan for the company overall, as well as location-specific plans?

EMPLOYEES

- What are your plans for your employees?
 - » Does their role allow them to work remotely?
 - » If not, are you able to keep paying them or will you need to conduct layoffs?
- Who are the “essential employees,” i.e. the employees you absolutely do not want to lose?

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SITE SECURITY

- Do you have cameras that can record already in place?
- Are there sufficient controls currently in place around the location to deter unwanted entry?
- Is the appropriate signage in place?
- Is there a facilities/maintenance crew that will remain at the location?
- In the event of a closure, if skeleton crews can be utilized to ensure the safety and security of locations, are you able to use the "essential employees" for this purpose?
- Is access to any upper levels blocked?
- Is lighting available around the site to deter unwanted entry during night hours?

THEFT

- Are you able to remove all highly valuable items (such as computers/electronics) from buildings?
 - » If not, are you able to identify what is not removable and document specifically what those items are?
- Are all highly valuable items permanently marked to indicate ownership, and is there a documented inventory list?
- Is there a secure and out-of-plain-view location onsite where items can be stored?

FIRE PROTECTION

- Is the fire suppression system in working order?
- Have all non-essential electrical connections been disconnected?
- Have combustible materials been cleared from hazardous areas, such as the electrical room?

WATER PROTECTION

- Have all non-essential water connections been disconnected?
- Has the sprinkler and HVAC system been inspected for leaks?
- Are the roof drains clear of debris?

For most situations, implementing layers of protection will provide you the most security. If there are specific locations that may pose a higher risk, consider adding additional lighting, cameras, and other controls in these locations. Additionally, if you are able to have multiple personnel onsite, station these individuals at these locations.

Again, if you have any additional questions or concerns, reach out to your Parker, Smith & Feek account team for further assistance.