



**Community**  
Underwriting

# MANAGING THE RISKS OF UNOCCUPIED PREMISES

## A resource to help Not for Profits manage the impacts of temporary shut down of their operations

Due to the coronavirus restrictions, many organisations are having to temporarily close and/or arrange for employees to conduct business from their homes. Temporarily unoccupied premises present increased risks due to a higher likelihood of break-ins, malicious damage, water damage, machinery breakdown and fire.

Unoccupancy can also have an impact on your insurance coverage.

It is important that your insurers are advised of any locations that will be unoccupied for more than the specific period stated in your insurance policy. This is usually 30 days under an Industrial Special Risks policy and can be up to 90 days under a Business Insurance Package. You will need to refer to your broker and the policy wording for the period applicable to your specific coverage.

- Cancel or divert any regular deliveries, redirect post where practical seal letterboxes and post no junk mail signs.
- Ensure that any fire and/or sprinkler systems are fully operational, and testing and inspection regimes maintained.
- Carry out a check to ensure that internal fire doors are closed.
- Shutdown any non-essential electrical devices and building utilities.

### Risk Mitigation

With proper planning – before, during and at recommencement of operations you can minimise the increased risks of unoccupied premises:

#### Closing the Premises

- Remove all external waste, pallets and empty skip bins ahead of closing.
- Empty all waste bins and relocate to a secure area, ideally at least 10 metres from the building. If this is not possible and bins and skips are within 10m, these should have lockable lids.
- Ensure important and/or sensitive records and systems are duplicated and stored at a secure offsite location. Remove cash and any high value items securely offsite.



- Isolate non-essential services, gas valves etc.
- Review any increased accumulation of unused vehicles considering proximity to buildings and any increased security required whilst the premises are unattended for a lengthy period.
- If you have any dangerous goods on your premises, ensure they are kept secure in their usual storage place, and review the inventory levels, documentation etc.

### During Temporary Unoccupancy

- Where at all possible (and subject to Government restrictions) try to implement periodic inspections of the building (internally and externally). Identify and remove any trip hazards.
- Consider the implementation of additional security protection measures such as additional locks, bars, lighting, CCTV surveillance and/or security guarding/patrolling companies.
- Carry out checks to ensure physical security measures are in place e.g. fences are in good repair, windows and doors are locked, shutters are in place, gates are locked, and any trip hazards removed. Ensure the integrity of perishable goods storage.
- Make sure all existing security protection (local and monitored alarms, CCTV etc) are operational and where monitored that the remote signalling is in place. Ensure sufficient numbers of keyholders are available to respond to an alarm within a reasonable period.
- Where practical ensure that essential maintenance continues with any remedial measures completed. If possible, ensure gutters and drains are clear of debris, ahead of winter conditions, lawns and gardens kept tidy.



The information provided in this Not for Profit resource is general in nature and needs to be considered against your organisations own risk profile and particular circumstances. For more specific advice you should contact your broker or Community Underwriting.