



Facilities Management

Heating System Failures

As winter sets in, municipal administrators and facility managers must be proactive in addressing the increased risk of heating system failures, which can lead to freezing pipes, equipment damage, and operational disruptions. These failures are particularly likely during unoccupied hours, such as weekends, holidays, or school breaks, when heating systems may be turned down or off, and staff are not on-site. Proactively addressing potential heating issues now can minimize the risk of severe damage and ensure your facilities remain functional throughout the cold months.



Loss Lessons Learned: Heating system failures are a major cause of winter-related losses for MIIA members, often resulting in frozen pipes, water damage, and significant operational disruptions. The financial costs of remediation, repairs, and lost productivity can be substantial, particularly when failures occur during unoccupied hours when the building is not monitored resulting in exacerbated damages.

Steps to Protect Your Facilities: To help you prepare for the upcoming winter, MIIA has developed a comprehensive [Technical Guidance Document](#) that outlines essential steps to prevent heating system failures and maintain a safe and operational environment during extreme cold. The guidance provides clear instructions for actions to take before, during, and after the onset of winter weather, including:

- Setting appropriate heat setbacks (based on your building's layout and insulation) with consideration for areas requiring supplemental heat.
- Securing exterior doors, windows, and fire doors to maintain building temperature and ensure energy efficiency, including inspecting weatherstripping and door seals.
- Using thermographic imaging to identify cold spots and heat loss around univents and other key areas, ensuring proper airflow and efficiency.
- Conducting regular staff walkthroughs during extreme cold weather to monitor temperatures, check for cold spots, and ensure unit ventilators and other heating systems are functioning properly.

By following these guidelines, you can significantly reduce the risks associated with heating system failures and protect your facility from winter-related damage.

For complete details on the steps to protect your facilities, please refer to the linked [Technical Guidance Document](#). In addition, some of these practices may be eligible for MIIA Rewards credit, and the tools may be eligible for a MIIA Risk Management or Flex Grant. Please discuss with your Risk Manager for further details.

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