



Facilities Management

Mechanical Failures

Municipal administrators and facility managers play a critical role in safeguarding facilities from the risks of mechanical failures during winter. Issues with circulator pumps, boilers, sump pumps, and unit ventilators can cause property damage, disrupt operations, and increase costs. These failures often occur during unoccupied periods, such as weekends or holiday breaks, when minor problems can escalate rapidly. Taking proactive measures and conducting regular inspections are essential to preventing costly breakdowns and ensuring continued operations.

Loss Lessons Learned: Mechanical system failures are a major contributor to winter-related losses for MIIA members, often leading to extensive property damage, emergency repairs, and operational disruptions. Many of these losses are preventable through routine inspections, timely and preventive maintenance, and emergency preparedness planning. As winter sets in, municipal administrators and facility managers must remain vigilant about the potential risks to critical building systems. Proper maintenance of HVAC, plumbing, security systems, and NFPA sprinkler systems is essential to ensuring the continued safety, efficiency, and functionality of municipal facilities. The cold months bring particular challenges, such as freezing pipes, system malfunctions, and increased energy demands.



Steps to Protect Your Facilities: To help you prepare for the upcoming winter and minimize the risks associated with mechanical system failures, MIIA has developed a comprehensive [Technical Guidance Document](#) that outlines essential actions to take before, during, and after extreme cold weather to ensure the proper functioning of your facility's systems and mechanical components. Some include:

- Scheduling professional inspections of boilers, furnaces, and heat pumps before the cold season.
- Testing sump and circulator pumps to ensure proper functionality.
- Inspecting unit ventilators regularly to ensure they are working properly.
- Testing backup generators and emergency heating systems to confirm they are functional.
- Inspecting and testing low point drains and backflow preventers to ensure they are not exposed to freezing temperatures.

By implementing these preventive measures, municipal administrators and facility managers can mitigate risks and protect critical infrastructure from mechanical failures during the winter months.

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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