

## TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL: COLDER WEATHER NOTICE

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**DATE:** February 16, 2006  
**TO:** Fraternal Property Management Association Contacts  
**FROM:** Todd Mattox, Education Consultant, HRH/Kirklin & Co., LLC  
**SUBJECT:** Protecting your facility during colder weather

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With the prediction of colder weather throughout the month of February, HRH/Kirklin & Co., LLC wishes to remind all clients and constituents of the exposed risks to property loss resulting from freeze, fire and water damage.

Two major fraternity fires have already occurred this year at Loyola University and Mount Union College, with an unfortunate fire fatality in a non-fraternity residence at the University of Maryland. The consequences of poor fire and building safety measures are real and can happen to anyone; here are a few steps to prevent possible loss.

### **Essential measures to minimize the risk of a freeze or water damage loss**

- Keep furnace on and thermostat set at or above 68 degrees
- Make sure all hoses are removed from exterior water spigots/faucets
- Drain water lines in lawn sprinkler system where appropriate
- Inspect windows and repair all broken glass
- Place additional insulation on exterior walls and windows
- Insulate exterior doors appropriately, and assure all close and latch completely
- Attach and secure downspouts with extension from foundation, not draining onto the driveway, sidewalks, or patios and fully displace water from walking areas

### *During periods of extreme colder temperatures*

- Open the indoor faucets slightly to allow water to trickle as moving water does not freeze as easily
- Leave the doors to cabinets that contain water lines open, this will allow heat to enter the area and help prevent freeze

### *Additional safety measures during colder months*

- Clear all necessary snow and ice from sidewalks, fire escapes, and walkways which may result in a slip and fall hazard



## **Danger Items to Limit & Restrict within chapter facilities regarding fire safety**

### *Space Heaters*

- Common within facilities throughout the colder months, especially among older facilities or before building heat is turned on; space heaters pose a dangerous risk to members.
- The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) reports that nearly 70% of home heating fires and deaths in 2002 were attributed to portable or fixed space heaters.
- It is recommended that facilities prohibit or restrict the use of space heaters whenever possible.

### *Extension Cords*

- Often seen as the quick fix to the answer of more outlets or greater flexibility in the placement of appliances or electronics, extension cords not only pose increased fire risk but also a safety hazard as tripping or entanglement in cords is common.
- The Consumer Product Safety Commission reports that an estimated 4,700 fires and 50 fatalities result from extension cords each year.

### *Smoking*

- According to the NFPA smoking materials (i.e. cigarettes, cigars, pipes, etc.) are the leading cause of fire deaths in the United States.
- Roughly 25% of all fire deaths in 2001 were attributed to smoking materials.
- Members should work towards enacting a no smoking policy throughout the entire building, restricting smoking to the outside ground level with proper receptacles for disposal.
- Be sure to provide a clear and safe area outside the facility for those who smoke, especially in the colder months when snow and ice may create a slip and fall hazard.

### *Candles*

- A leading cause of fire among student and Greek housing are the dangers of candles and the often exposed and unattended flame which they create.
- In 2002, 40% of candle fires started in the bedroom, resulting in 30% of associated deaths according to the NFPA.
- Members should prohibit the use of candles throughout the facility, and develop methods to limit or replace use within customary ceremonies.



### **What happens if a loss is sustained?**

1. Notify the fire and emergency services and obtain medical attention for any injured parties. Notify the local police if any laws have been broken.
2. Obtain temporary housing for displaced residents of the fraternity. If you purchased loss of rents & extra expense protection, keep records and receipts of for your claim.
3. Do what is reasonable and necessary to protect covered property from further damage: (i.e. hire contractors to board up windows, clean up standing water, put tarp over hole in roof, and overall mitigate your losses). Keep accurate records of these expenses.

One provider of professional services in loss control is *ServiceMaster Clean*; they can be contacted at 1-800-RESPOND or [www.servicemasterclean.com](http://www.servicemasterclean.com)

4. Notify your insurance agent of the loss as soon as possible. When reporting a loss, the following information is needed:
  - Insurance Policy number
  - Date and time of loss
  - Type and location of loss
  - Estimated extent of damage
  - Name and number of local contact
5. If feasible, separate damaged from undamaged property and make inventory of the damaged items. Additionally, take photos of the damaged property once the facility and general area is secured and close proximity is feasible. If you have receipts for the original purchases of the damaged items, include them with the inventory list.
6. Cooperate with the insurance adjuster in the investigation and settlement of the claim.

For further information or questions regarding property loss and claim information, contact HRH/Kirklin & Co., LLC at 1-800-736-4327 or visit our website at [www.kirklin.com](http://www.kirklin.com). February is National Safety Awareness Month, what is your organization doing to assure a safe and healthy environment for members?

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