

Unoccupied premises

Risk checklist

In response to local government and the World Health Organization (WHO) guidance/mandates, many businesses within the global logistics sector have had to change their work practices. In some cases, this may include leaving business premises unoccupied for an extended, undefined period.

Unoccupied property and the contents therein are at an elevated risk during the COVID-19 lockdown. Whilst not exhaustive, the below checklist may assist in protecting your business, preserving your property and mitigating the potential risk during periods where premises remain vacant.

Of course, there are a multitude of contractual arrangements underpinning warehouse operations. Some facilities will be owned outright, many will be leased from a landlord and many more will be multi-tenure facilities. Such detailed circumstances can be complex when temporarily vacating a premises.

These circumstances may give rise to challenges concerning insurance, safety, security and utilities amongst others. Where multi-tenure facilities are concerned, as with general safety principles, communication and collaboration with fellow tenants will likely be critical to achieve a successful outcome.

Risk checklist

Insurance

Have you discussed your intended plans with your insurance broker and identified which policies might be affected?	Yes	No
Are there warranties under any applicable policy regarding occupancy?	Yes	No
Have you notified all applicable insurers that your property is vacant?	Yes	No
Have your insurers placed any warranties on the policy in view of the property being vacant? If so, do you understand the extent and how you can ensure they are not breached? <i>Consider regular recorded inspections.</i>	Yes	No
Have you assessed the approximate total value of goods in storage to ensure that this doesn't exceed any applicable limit under your insurance policy?	Yes	No

Contractual notifications

Have you notified the landlord of your intention to temporarily vacate the premises?	Yes	No
Have you identified and notified any other party who has a contractual interest in your use of the premises (such as other tenants/cleaning and maintenance companies)?	Yes	No

Maintenance

Is there any planned/routine maintenance to be undertaken during the period when the premises will be unoccupied? <i>Consider supervision and permits.</i>	Yes	No
Are your contractors able to continue ongoing maintenance and inspection of all detection systems at your premises as required?	Yes	No
Do you have a recent documented inspection of the drains, pipes and guttering of your premises?	Yes	No
Do you have a recent documented inspection of the roof of your premises?	Yes	No
Are you able to undertake the next planned inspections?	Yes	No

Risk checklist

Security risk assessment

Are there visual deterrents at your premises? <i>Consider perimeter fences, gates, signs, visible CCTV.</i>	Yes	No
Are these deterrents maintained and in sound operational condition? <i>Consider length of time since last documented inspection.</i>	Yes	No
Do you have security lighting and is it in good working order?	Yes	No
Have you considered provisions to ensure that CCTV recordings are managed during the period of vacation? <i>Note that many systems will have a finite recording capability.</i>	Yes	No
Do you have contents within your premises (e.g. fixtures/IT equipment/cash/cargo) that would be attractive to thieves?	Yes	No
Are there any commercially sensitive/valuable contents within your premises?	Yes	No
Is the building/premises secured/locked/alarmed?	Yes	No
Who has control of the keys/alarm codes?	Yes	No
Have you requested that any emergency services or local authorities monitor your premises?	Yes	No
Are regular visual inspections being made to ensure the building remains secure?	Yes	No
Have all vehicles on site been locked and alarmed where applicable?	Yes	No
Have keys been removed from any vehicles/handling equipment (forklift trucks) and securely stored?	Yes	No
Is cargo currently stored within vehicles?	Yes	No
Is cargo currently stored within your premises?	Yes	No

Emergency services/crisis management

Do you have an emergency response plan for unoccupied premises?	Yes	No
Do you know the current response times for emergency services to your premises?	Yes	No
Are any emergency services or local authorities able to monitor your premises through the period of vacancy?	Yes	No
Have any alarms (e.g. fire/security) that are linked directly to emergency services been tested within the last six months?	Yes	No

Risk checklist

Fire risk assessment

Are sprinkler systems/fire detection equipment installed, maintained and tested?	Yes	No
Are the premises monitored remotely for signs of activation?	Yes	No
Are internal fire resistant doors closed/locked?	Yes	No
Has any electrical equipment been left on charge?	Yes	No
Is the perimeter of your building free from waste and combustible material?	Yes	No
Has all waste and combustible material been removed from inside your building?	Yes	No
If you have waste and combustible materials within your premises, are they stored in metal receptacles?	Yes	No
Have you checked both the premises and any vehicles for potentially flammable spillages?	Yes	No

General considerations/utilities

Have any fuel storage facilities been secured and isolated or drained?	Yes	No
Have you sealed your letterboxes and redirected your post?	Yes	No
Have you disconnected unnecessary utility services? <i>Remember that water is needed for a sprinkler system.</i>	Yes	No
Where applicable, are you remotely monitoring the temperature of any cold stores?	Yes	No
Have you maintained low level heating?	Yes	No
In the event of cold conditions, is pipework lagged?	Yes	No
Are you or a third party, monitoring both the security and fire alarm systems remotely?	Yes	No