

TIME SENSITIVE MATERIAL: WINTER BREAK NOTICE

DATE: December 6, 2005
TO: Fraternal Property Management Association, Inspection Contact
FROM: Todd Mattox, Education Consultant, HRH/Kirklin & Co., LLC
SUBJECT: Preparing a chapter house for WINTER BREAK

Each year universities and colleges across the country close for holiday breaks and each year hundreds and thousands of dollars are incurred due to lack of properly preparing a chapter house for the colder winter months and school break. We need your help to reverse this trend by eliminating these avoidable claims. It takes only a little effort on your part and, most importantly, very little expense to the chapter.

Please take the time to make sure your chapter adheres to the attached checklist. We strongly recommend the steps be communicated between the chapter and the house corporation weekly up to the start of the winter break. If we help you avoid a claim at your chapter house this upcoming winter break, we also help **YOU** avoid a very big headache!

What are the leading risks to a chapter facility during holiday breaks?

1. Water freeze,
2. Fire; and
3. Vandalism and theft.

What can you do to avoid these types of losses?

- Service your furnace/boiler. Routine maintenance is critical and relatively inexpensive. In the long run it will save you money. Your furnace will run more efficiently and be more dependable, which is critical during periods when there will be no one around to monitor its performance.
- Leave your furnace on and maintain the heat at or above 60 degrees.
- Shut off the water supply at the main valve and open the faucets. If your property is equipped with a fire sprinkler system, please check with the contractor to ensure its effectiveness is not compromised.
- Make sure all hoses are removed from exterior water spigots.
- Service and drain water within the lawn sprinkler system
- Leave open the doors to cabinets that contain water lines. This will allow heat to enter the area.
- Check all rooms and unplug all non-essential appliances and electronics. The source of many fires was an improperly used, unattended or malfunctioning appliance or space heater. If they are not plugged in, they are not a threat.

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- Utilize a responsible member or alumnus/alumna to check on the property, at a minimum, every 24 hours. Controlling the extent of a loss after an occurrence is critical. Make sure this designated person has the appropriate contact information. We recommend that the person is provided with:
 - Alumni/House Corporation and Chapter President Contact
 - A Company such as ServiceMaster that can respond to extract water and/or secure the property from sustaining further damage. You can locate a ServiceMaster franchise in your area by calling **1-800-RESPOND**.
 - Insurance claim reporting information. **Members of FPMA can report a loss at, www.kirklin.com, or by calling 1-800-736-4327**
- Make sure the property is securely locked and ask the local police department to check on it periodically to deter vandals and thieves. Don't forget to securely store all valuables!
- Clean the chapter house before the break. This will ensure that no heat registers are blocked and will reduce any potential fire hazards.

This list of precautions is not intended only for chapters in the North. In December of 1998 and January of 1999 over 1.3 million dollars was paid out on freeze related claims. A majority of these losses were chapter houses located in the South. An unexpected cold spell hit the region and almost no one took any preventive measures. The weather is unpredictable; every chapter should follow the steps outlined above regardless of the geographical location.

Why should you take the time to do this?

- All the recommended preventative steps are relatively inexpensive or cost nothing more than a little of your time and effort. You could incur the expenses associated with each step listed above for the next ten years and not even come close to the deductible amount.
- Dealing with an insurance claim can be time consuming and a hassle.
- Dealing with displaced tenants is a nightmare and can result in decreased revenue when they don't come back.

We appreciate your assistance in reducing possible loss to chapter property during the school break period. By being proactive and addressing the need to prepare the chapter facility for colder winter months, you can prevent a possible property loss and assure a safe facility for the undergraduate members.

If you have any questions or need additional assistance regarding risk prevention and education resources or materials, please contact Todd Mattox, Education Consultant at 1-800-736-4327 extension 1-216 or by email at tmattox@kirklin.com.

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