

Fall/Winter Maintenance Guide

Each winter, facilities in our Archdiocese experience losses which could be avoided if good maintenance procedures were practiced. Some of the preventable losses are property damage from leaky roofs, ice dams, frozen pipes, and bodily injury from slips and falls. Here are some tips that will reduce losses.

Clean out gutters and roof drains

- ✓ When the last leaves have fallen, gutters should be cleaned out, using either a hand scoop or by hand. After removing leaves and large debris, use the hose for a final rinse and check for low points and leaky seams. Caulk where necessary with gutter caulk.
- ✓ Make sure gutters are securely attached to the roof, and to prevent leaf buildup, install gutter screens.
- ✓ Downspouts that don't run into subsurface drainage pipes should empty onto splash blocks that direct water away from the foundation and away from walkways and parking areas.
- ✓ Clean out roof drains and the surrounding roof. If you are using heat tape to keep drains open, test the heat tape.

Entrances

- ✓ Lay down good quality, rubber-backed carpet mats over hard surface flooring in entrances and lobbies. Consider purchasing a commercial floor dryer fan for heavily used entrances.

Search and seal

- ✓ Anticipate leaks before they happen and seal out snow and cold winds. Scrape away decayed wood and caulk, paying special attention to the areas around windows, doors and places where utilities enter the building through sills and foundations. Repair using the appropriate caulk, and insulate. Also, check your roof and seal small cracks with roofing cement. Replace cracked or curled shingles, remembering to seal nail heads with roofing cement.

Furnace/boiler/chimney inspection

- ✓ Arrange for a yearly inspection of burning chambers and heat pumps on oil-fired furnaces and boilers. Gas fired equipment should be serviced at least every other year.
- ✓ Change furnace filters once a month during the fall and winter months.
- ✓ In sub-zero weather, check the furnace in unoccupied buildings **twice a day**.
- ✓ Fireplace chimneys should be inspected and cleaned yearly, if used regularly.

Plumbing and prevention of frozen pipes

- ✓ All parish buildings should be adequately heated during the winter months. When sub-zero temps hit, heat should be turned up by 5 degrees and frozen pipes will probably be avoided. The minimum acceptable setting for heat is 55 degrees, but up to 60 degrees when the temperature dips below zero. **Recommend installing an alarm with thermostat in unoccupied buildings with water.**
- ✓ Air conditioning units should be shut off, properly drained and covered.
- ✓ Water supply lines that are not used in the winter should be shut off. The faucet, hose bibs and other taps should be drained and left open to break the vacuum.
- ✓ Water or heating pipes that are in concealed spaces or receive limited heat should be insulated. Another option is the use of heat tape. Heat tape should always be used in accordance with manufacturers' instructions and checked prior to use for cracking or burn marks. Only one layer of heat tape should be used; don't overlap coils.

Remove snow from roofs

- ✓ Inspect your roofs for snow in excess of 12 inches deep. This snow should be removed to prevent ice dams and leaks when it starts melting.