



10 Tips for Winterizing a Business

Winter can significantly impact a business's operations, so companies need to take appropriate steps to prepare for the challenges the season's weather brings. This article provides 10 tips on how to winterize a business effectively.

1. **Assess threats from winter weather.** Conducting a risk assessment can help identify areas that winter weather threatens. Developing and utilizing a winter preparedness checklist can assist businesses in reviewing specific risks, as exposures can vary by location and industry.
 2. **Conduct a winter inspection to protect physical location(s).** A thorough inspection of physical location(s) can help prevent winter weather damage and other issues. Roofs, drainage, windows, doors and other outside property should all be checked. This review can guide necessary repairs or modifications.
 3. **Protect pipes against freezing.** Water damage from pipe bursts can cause severe property damage, so businesses should take measures to prevent them. These include unhooking outdoor hoses, insulating pipes, draining irrigation systems, installing leak detectors and keeping the building's temperature at least 55 degrees Fahrenheit. In some situations, keeping a trickle of water flowing through the pipes can also help prevent them from freezing.
 4. **Check the heating system and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** A heating system tune-up can help ensure it is functioning correctly and ready for cold weather. It is also essential to confirm smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and other fire prevention systems are installed and working.
 5. **Develop a snow and ice removal plan.** Snow and ice removal plans can help keep business property safe and operational. Whether a business chooses to hire a contractor or complete the work itself, keeping parking lots and sidewalks clear is important.
- Additionally, companies should review the slip-and-fall hazards in and around their property and take proper steps to address these risks.
6. **Prepare an emergency kit for winter weather.** Sudden and severe weather can leave employees and customers stranded at a place of business. Having an emergency kit with essential items, including food, water, blankets and first-aid supplies, can help ensure their safety in these situations.
 7. **Establish a communication plan.** Staff, vendors and clients may need to be contacted on short notice in the event of severe winter weather. Businesses should establish a plan to contact these parties as well as emergency staff and contractors.
 8. **Promote winter weather driving safety.** Businesses should confirm their vehicles are ready for winter and promote safe winter weather driving practices. This may include having infrastructure in place so employees can stay home and work remotely if dangerous road conditions arise.
 9. **Back up data.** Winter storms can cause unexpected power outages. As such, businesses should back up their data to prepare for these occurrences; data loss can have major financial and operational impacts. Businesses should also consider securing a backup generator as an added safeguard.
 10. **Review insurance coverage.** The change of seasons presents an opportunity for businesses to review their insurance. Working with a licensed insurance professional can ensure the necessary coverage with adequate limits are in place.

It is crucial for businesses to proactively address the risks of winter weather. For more information and risk management guidance, contact us today.

The Risks of Lithium-ion Batteries

Lithium-ion batteries (LIBs) offer several advantages over other types of batteries, including rechargeability and versatility. However, LIBs come with risks, including the potential to cause fires or explosions, and they contain harmful chemicals. Additionally, they are vulnerable to supply chain disruptions. As such, businesses need to be aware of these risks and know how to address them. Read on for more information on LIBs and tips on mitigating exposures.

LIBs Overview and Risks

LIBs' energy density, or the amount of energy they can store, and their voltage capacity generally outpace other batteries. LIBs are also relatively lightweight, versatile in what they can power, long-lasting, low-maintenance, resistant to self-discharge and capable of being recharged quickly. These attributes make it an attractive power source for many of the technologies businesses regularly use. Although LIBs offer many benefits, they also present safety, financial and reputational risks to businesses, including:

- **Fires, explosions and toxic fumes**—LIBs are prone to creating dangerous fires and can eject flammable and toxic gasses that can be difficult to extinguish.
- **Environmental harm**—LIBs require minerals from processes that have negative environmental impacts, such as soil and water contamination, erosion, air and water pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions during manufacturing. If not disposed of properly, LIBs can also pose a fire hazard and cause toxic metal leakage in landfills.
- **Supply chain disruptions and labor concerns**—The processing of material needed for LIBs is concentrated in areas that are geopolitical rivals to the United States. Additionally, several key areas have unstable regulations, which can result in the revocation of production contracts. Many jurisdictions that play an integral role in the supply chain have also been alleged to violate human and labor rights.

Tips to Mitigate the Risks of LIBs

With the concerns LIBs present, businesses must take steps to reduce their risks. Actions to consider include referencing appropriate test standards, training employees on LIB use and safety and how to respond to LIB-related hazards, inspecting LIBs before use, storing LIBs properly and always following manufacturer instructions. Additionally, businesses should have strategies in place to prepare for supply chain disruptions. They should work with suppliers who produce LIBs in an environmentally friendly way that adheres to labor and human rights regulations.

LIBs offer several advantages over other types of batteries. However, they also present risks that can result in negative impacts. By taking appropriate measures, businesses can address these LIB-related concerns and mitigate their exposures. Contact us today for more risk management solutions.



According to the National Fire Protection Association, LIB fires happen for various reasons, including physical damage, (e.g., the battery is penetrated, crushed or exposed to water), electrical damage (e.g., overcharging or using improper charging equipment), exposure to extreme temperatures and product defects.