



## *Protecting Your Dental Office Property during Extended Closures*

### **Key Tips to Consider...**

***Any time your dental office is closed for an extended period of time, there is an increased risk of theft and vandalism. Additionally, property damage that occurs while the office is closed can be more severe if the office is left unattended during this time. Below are some helpful tips to implement and consider while you have minimal access or close your office for a period of time.***

### **Utilities**

- Disconnect any unnecessary electrical appliances and equipment.
- Conserve energy by decreasing the temperature on your water heater.
- Set the thermostat to a minimal setting (55° F) to conserve energy but keep out the freeze and/or set low temperature alarms.
- The fire protection sprinkler system also needs to be protected from temperatures below 40F to ensure proper operation.
- During warmer months or in warmer climates, make sure to set your air conditioning to an appropriate temperature to avoid damage from humidity or mold.
- Check that sump pump is operational and remote alarms are working.
- Ensure all refrigerators and freezers are secure and doors are closed.
- Irrigation systems should be turned off and disconnected to prevent accidental flooding.
- Purge or drain watering systems to prevent corrosion and potential leaks
- Shut off water systems where possible.

### **Security and Property Protection**

- Secure vehicle and pedestrian entrances and exits.
- Lock all windows and doors.
- Requested random checks by the police department.
- Alert neighbors or neighborhood watch programs that the building will be vacant so they can also assist with random checks.
- Have a central station-monitored security system in place.

## Security (continued)...

- Provide updated contact information to the companies that centrally monitor security and fire alarms.
- Plan to have someone inspect the property at least weekly.
- Install security cameras, including temporary or wireless, to cover the interior/exterior of the facility.
- Consider certain exterior aspects of your building:
  - Temporary weather proofing;
  - Drainage or flooding hazards; and
  - Gutters and down spouts cleared.
- Have a response plan in place with your staff and local responders (where permitted by state).

## Inventory

- Consider temporarily relocating expensive valuables that are not necessary for office operations.
- Maintain a current list of inventory:
  - Tools and equipment;
  - Computers and technology devices;
  - Furniture, fixtures, and art work; and
  - Other assets.
- Have electronic data backed up with off-site storage of back-ups.

## Perishable Inventory

- Suspend shipments of items that are on auto-order.
- Follow guidelines from your local health department or the FDA.
- Install a remote alarm on refrigerators and freezers that sends warning notifications of temperature increases above optimal ranges.
- Have an alarm response plan in place.

## Fire

- Contact the local fire department to alert them of the vacancy and any changes to building access. Ask them to revise their pre-incident plan (NFPA 1620) accordingly.
- Additional monitoring may be necessary because of the following reasons:
  - There may be a delay in reporting of fires because of the vacancy; and
  - Fire could also start due to attempted theft or vandalism.
- Install a central station-monitored fire detection system.
- Ensure that the automatic fire protection sprinkler system is operational:
  - Valves open and locked or equipped with valve tamper switch alarms;
  - Water flow alarm operational; and
  - Alarms monitored by a central station.

*Sources: York Risk Control Services, LLC / Sedgwick; Aspen Loss Control*