



RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

# Frozen Assets

Preventive measures can minimize property losses due to extreme weather and equipment failures

**By Chris Cummings**

## OVERVIEW

From Mother Nature to equipment failures, plenty can transform a peaceful property into pandemonium.

Just ask one HUB insured who returned home from a long day's work to find a flooded mess at his feet. A ruptured water line to his refrigerator drenched his home, causing \$100,000 in damages.

Residential and commercial properties are among the largest investments you will make in your lifetime. With a few precautionary measures, you can help protect your investment and minimize damage should an unfortunate event occur.

Severe weather – such as hurricanes, tornadoes, windstorms and blizzards – along with their aftereffects (compromised structures, pooling waters, frozen utilities and melting ice) are catastrophic disruptors. They damage and destroy homes, businesses and even people's lives.

In addition to unwieldy weather, plumbing, HVAC units and other basic services can fail or malfunction, causing significant damage throughout a property.

While inclement weather and accidents can't be avoided completely, there are simple and inexpensive measures to take that will help secure properties and reduce damages should an unfortunate event occur.



# AWASH IN SYSTEM FAILURES

Water damages spring from a plethora of sources: Failing HVAC systems, broken toilet lines, hot water tanks in disrepair, faulty roof coverings and flashing, sump pump malfunctions and clogged gutters.

## Tips to help prevent and minimize potential losses:

- Plan semi-annual roofing and flashing inspections.
- Clean gutters and drain spouts twice a year to ensure there are no blockages and water flows freely. Consider installing gutter filter covers or guards to deter debris buildup.
- Ensure HVAC systems are equipped with float switches, their water pans drain freely, and all lines are clean and unobstructed.
- Periodically inspect all plumbing and supply lines, especially those that are prone to rust and corrode, such as bathroom sinks, toilets lines and hot water heaters.
- Use pipe insulation to protect pipes from freezing, especially those directly exposed to frigid temperatures.
- Install water leak detection devices around appliances, such as refrigerators, freezers, washing machines, coolers or anything connected to water supply lines.
- Detect and fix water leaks promptly.
- Check sump pumps are operating properly.

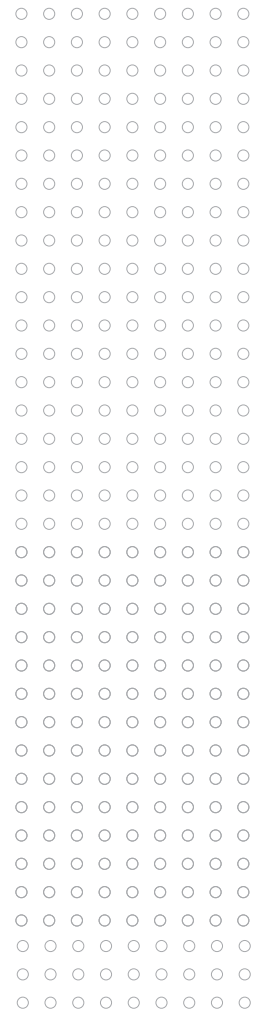


# WINDS & LOSSES

Heavy thunderstorm activities often are accompanied by high-winds and turbulent conditions that can cause severe property damage.

## Consider these measures to prevent wind losses:

- Conduct annual inspections of the roof and exterior coverings to ensure they are in excellent condition.
- Protect building openings from potential wind projectiles.
- Remove all dead trees from the property and keep tree limbs manicured so they do not hang over any structures.
- Ensure caulking around windows and doors are in good shape and not cracked or missing. Fill any holes or gaps around pipes or wires that enter the property structure with a waterproof sealant or caulking.
- Make sure all fencing, porches, canopies and sheds are structurally sound and attached to the ground. Secure any parts that may appear loose or weak.



# OH, HAIL NO

These little pellets of frozen droplets can grow to the size of golf balls – and even bigger – as they shower down from the atmosphere creating a hailstorm. Hail can cause significant damage to properties, especially to roofs, skylights and solar panels.

## The following precautions can help protect against hail losses:

- Have annual inspections on all buildings to ensure roofs are in excellent condition. If damages are located, a licensed roofing contractor should address the issues.
- Protect roof-mounted equipment by using a hail guard or a specific system that covers outdoor components.
- All skylights and solar panels should be impact-rated and impact-resistant.



# FIRE FIGHTS

Fires tend to be fast, furious and frequent. They spread quickly, resulting in major property losses. Smoke detectors and regular equipment maintenance can help prevent fires and minimize property losses.

## Consider these preventive measures to help protect your property from fire losses:

- Maintain good housekeeping. Regularly remove dust, dirt and debris; properly handle and promptly dispose waste; and properly store supplies, especially those that are flammable.
- Perform regular preventive maintenance on your buildings, homes and equipment. Preventive maintenance will minimize losses and improve the efficiency and life of your buildings, homes and equipment.
- Maintain safety equipment, such as emergency exit lighting, fire alarm system and fire extinguishers.
- Install and maintain protective devices, such as an automatic sprinkler system.
- Install a monitored smoke detector system.
- Unplug items not in use.
- Use surge protectors.

**REMEMBER:** The cost of semi-annual inspections, regular maintenance and repairs is minimal compared to the cost of your insurance deductible and the time lost dealing with property damage and restoration.

For more information, reach out to your HUB advisor.

*Chris Cummings is claims leader for HUB International – Southeast region.*

