



## REOPENING IDLE FACILITIES AND RESTARTING OPERATIONS.



Restarting operations and ramping up your business after remaining idle for some time can prove challenging in the management of associated risks. It is imperative that operations resume in a methodical, safe and effective manner. Depending on the complexity of your operations, the process should be organized using a comprehensive risk assessment. This document will assist you in the safe and organized process of restarting operations at your idled facility.



### Safety and Security Evaluation

- **Inspect both exterior and interior** areas of the facility to ensure structural integrity, and that no critical items are missing. For the exterior this includes roof inspections (drains and scuppers are clear and no signs of leakage for example), wall integrity (pest control or vandalism) and ensuring that any overgrown landscaping that may compromise structures is corrected (trees, shrubs, etc. that overhang buildings or grow against exterior walls).
- **Ensure proper cleaning** has occurred from both a physical housekeeping standpoint (trash removal and waste) as well as for the health of the employees (adequate disinfection, cleaning of refrigerators, etc.).
- **Make sure all perimeter and area detection devices** are functioning while providing alarm annunciation and proper supervision at control panels and third party agencies where engaged.
- **Proper water quality** is critical for both personnel and processes. Flush and run the systems as water in piping has remained stagnant for an extended period of time. It may be beneficial to conduct specialized water quality testing where needed.
- **When using contractors** to assist in the reopening of the facility, ensure that they are properly screened and that they have the proper certifications to complete the work.

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## Business Continuity Review

- **Review your business continuity plan** and refer to restoration and recovery procedures to assure all necessary administrative, production, service and other process restoration actions are implemented.
- **Review and follow all developed business restoration checklists** including reaching out to key vendors, suppliers and employees to assure everyone is in line with the planned restart and that all processes can be supported. For important machinery, it may be prudent to do a thorough inventory of potential needed spare parts before machinery start-ups.
- **Where dependencies on vendors or suppliers exist** and are out of sync with the planned restart, identify alternatives for service, supplies, equipment, etc. and put action plans in place to assure business restart is as comprehensive as possible.



## Fire Protection and Detection

- **Fire protection systems should be visually and physically inspected** per NFPA 25, Inspection, Testing and Maintenance of Water-Based Fire Protection Systems and other pertinent standards where applicable, to ensure proper operating conditions.
- **For systems that were impaired for any reason** (i.e., draining of systems to prevent freezing, etc.), they should be flushed to remove any potential obstructions, re-charged and put back in service. Follow the proper impairment handling procedures that were previously implemented and/or recommended. Reach out to The Hartford Risk Engineering team for an Impairment Handling Program template to support you where needed.
- **Inspect and test all fire detection systems** to ensure control panels are functional, and annunciation checks are conducted for internal alarm notification devices and receipt of notification at central station monitoring.
- **Automatic fire doors** should be inspected and tested to ensure they operate appropriately.



## Utilities

- **All utilities should be thoroughly inspected** visually for any signs of damage, such as vandalism and pest control issues. Assure all control valves are inspected for proper position and test any automatic valves for proper functioning.

- **A plan should be created prior to powering** the various circuits in the facility. The plan should be systematic versus engaging all at once so that issues may be identified independently. This should be done with at least 2-3 person teams if possible. Incident histories have shown that many failures can occur at start-ups.
- **Where possible, conduct thorough physical inspections of the utilities.** For items such as boilers or furnaces, the required inspections, cleaning and purging should be completed prior to putting them into service. If your maintenance staff does not have the expertise to complete the processes safely, engage a qualified vendor. Where multiple gas-fired equipment exists, they should be actuated individually with integrity checks before engaging subsequent equipment items.
- **Have a qualified electrician inspect and conduct proper testing** of the electrical systems prior to beginning operations. This could include thermographic imaging, re-torque of typically higher-demanding electrical circuits, testing overload protection, checking transformer oil conditions, etc.
- **HVAC systems should be inspected** for proper functioning of monitoring and control features. Dampers, ductwork, fuel or power supply, ventilation openings and equipment, etc. should be investigated for good condition and proper operation. In addition to this, these systems should be fully sanitized and disinfected prior to operation.
- **Inspect all refrigeration equipment** for proper operation, monitoring control features, collection of waste/dirt/dust, and clean and ready for operation prior to start-up. Where there are multiple refrigerant systems installed, start each one up individually and ensure proper function before engaging subsequent systems. Similar to the above, these systems should be fully sanitized and disinfected prior to operation.
- **When reopening valves and piping** for water services, do so slowly as to prevent water hammering which can damage piping and devices.
- **Facility lighting** (emergency, exit and ceiling) should be inspected, tested, repaired and replaced as needed. Engaging lighting circuits methodically will allow a better opportunity to recognize improper conditions quickly.

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## Equipment and Processes

- **Conduct a thorough visual inspection** to see that no damage (vandalism, pest control, etc.) has occurred. This includes ensuring components are in good condition, piping is clear, and valves are in good working condition.
- **Processes utilizing flammable gases or liquids should** be fully purged prior to being put in service. Integrity of joints and use-point devices should be checked and in good condition prior to engaging any systems.
- **Some equipment may need to be re-commissioned and/or recertified** prior to activation and use. Follow proper commissioning practices to ensure compliance.



- **It is imperative that equipment and processes are thoroughly cleaned** and sanitized prior to being brought online. Do not cross contaminate already clean surfaces.
- **Any resetting of operational limits, safety settings or control points** on process equipment should only be conducted by OEM certified personnel or an approved third party.

- **Maintenance checks and procedures** that may have passed required dates during the idling of the facility should be first conducted once initial safety checks have been completed, but prior to activating any critical equipment.
- **Where hot work procedures are warranted**, establish a physical fire watch following completion of the work for 24 to 48 hours. Providing a guard to oversee the area may be beneficial.
- **Assess adequacy of internet/telephonic bandwidth** for increased demand on capacity during and following resumption of operations. Some businesses will resume with a combination of site and remote operations, at least for a period of time, due to revised business models. Check communications support services, equipment, routers, bandwidth, etc. to assure your operation can function in an increased site/remote role for employees and customers.

### Additional Resources

- [Business Continuity Planning](#)
- [Pandemic and Supply Chain Risks](#)
- [Water Damage Prevention Planning](#)
- [Hot Work Permit Program](#)
- [Hot Work Permit Form](#)
- [Fire System Impairment Tag](#)
- [Fire System Impairment Log](#)
- [Sprinkler System Impairments](#)
- [Fire Protection Self Inspection Form](#)
- [Gas Line Purging](#)
- [Gas Purging Checklist](#)
- [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, CDC April 1st, 2020](#)
- [Recovering from COVID-19 Building Closures, AIHA 2020](#)

### LEARN MORE.

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20-ML-309581 © May 2020 The Hartford



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