

# Locked down tight

By Lisa Knapton

To comply with Governor Inslee's March 25th "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" emergency shut down order, many members have ceased operations and closed member-owned facilities deemed non-essential. Some of these facilities, for example Senior Centers, had previously been in operation seven days a week. As we move further into our period of COVID-19 quarantine, members need to consider the risks associated with buildings and other facilities that remain unused and unattended. The risk of fire or damage attributable to lack of maintenance may increase during times when facilities are shut down and remained unmanned. Lack of security may lead to potential intrusions, vandalism and theft.

The following risk controls should be considered during shutdown of member facilities including but not limited to:

- Ensure all facilities being shut down are listed on the member's property schedule if property and/or contents coverage is wanted.
- Reduce or eliminate combustible materials located inside buildings such as packaging, pallets, dust, lint, oily rags.
- Ensure all flammable liquids are placed in appropriate storage containers, preferably safety cabinets which can be closed or sealed and that ventilation systems are operational, if required, for removal of flammable vapors.
- Confirm that all combustible debris and flammable materials have been relocated to safe distances from the exterior of the building.
- Ensure all exterior doors are fitted with commercial deadlocks. Secure all windows with appropriate locks. Make sure all facility exterior keys or fobs are accounted for by use of a key logbook. If all keys or fobs cannot be accounted for, the member should consider replacing the locks.
- Immediately repair any breach in building or perimeter security.

Once a member has taken steps to secure their facility for closure, there are still inspections that will need to be conducted and maintenance performed. Members should visit their closed facilities periodically to inspect for damage or signs of unauthorized entry. If possible, inspections of closed facilities should not be conducted while unaccompanied or without the use of a good communication method.

Inspections and maintenance should include but not be limited to:

- Window and door locks should be checked to verify they are still secure.
- Fire alarms, fire suppressant/sprinkler systems and security systems (including security cameras and lighting) should be checked to verify they are operational, and maintenance performed where needed.
- Maintain the buildings and grounds in good repair, removing vandalism and replacing broken windows as soon as possible.

If a member-owned facility does experience physical damage, please see WCIA's Liability Resource Manual Guideline, ADM.18 *Mitigating Property Loss to Member Facilities*. The Liability Resource Manual is available through the Member Resources page on the WCIA website: <https://www.wciapool.org/member-resources>. WCIA staff is available for your telephone or email questions Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.