

## Facilitator — April/May 2015



### The Heat is On

Jeff Dover

Summer is right around the corner. Is your facility ready?

Warm weather is on the way. Soon, calls will be coming in about stuffy buildings, broken irrigation and other hotweather emergencies.

No matter what kind of weather your facility went through this winter, it could probably use some maintenance to get prepared for summer. Below are several areas where action is needed. Some can be handled by facility managers or store operators, while others will require professional services.

#### HVAC

Spring is the time to have all the air conditioning units professionally serviced. A complete coil cleaning needs to be performed to optimize unit performance. I recommend a chemical cleaning rather than simply hosing down the coils. Dirty coils will use up to 40 percent more energy as compared to clean ones. Not only will the unit cost more to operate, but the chance of a breakdown on another component within the system increases dramatically.

In addition, the refrigerant pressures and levels will need to be checked to ensure the system is fully charged. A leak during the winter months could have released product into the atmosphere. The amps/volts need to be checked on the compressors, condenser fan motors and evaporator blower motors. All electrical connections need to be checked for proper tightness. The condensate pan and drain lines all need to be cleaned to facilitate the removal of condensate off the evaporator coils. Check all belts for proper tension and wear and tear.

Lastly, change the air filters. Depending on the local environment, filters should be changed every three months at a minimum. Normally, every other month is required.

For a complete A/C maintenance list inspection report, visit the RFMA website under "Resource Library" and "Scopes of Work."

#### Roof

After a long winter, the roof is usually ignored. As long as it's not leaking, it's fine, right? Well, a lack of leaks is great, but the fall and winter months also present an opportunity to get it cleaned up for the spring rains.

General roof maintenance activities may be completed by operations personnel at the store, a local handyman or a roofing contractor. If the roof is new, I would recommend paying the installing contractor to visit the site, do a walk-through and perform maintenance as needed. This will ensure the warranty remains valid.

If store personnel or a local handyman is used, inspect the following areas:

- The entire roof: Pick up all items that could cause a leak if stepped on.
- Roof drains: Clean out all drains to ensure proper water flow. (This should be done monthly.)
- A/Cs, exhaust and make-up air fans: Check curb bases for proper adherence and seals.
- Roof tie-ins: Where applicable, check areas where two surfaces tie together. Expansion and contraction may cause the two to pull away. Check the area for a proper seal, and reseal with approved sealant if necessary.
- The entire building: Check for any cracks or gaps that may have arisen from the colder months, particularly on parapet walls. Seal as needed.
- Roof penetrations: Check vents, plumbing, electrical, refrigerant lines, etc. for any gaps or cracks. Seal as needed.
- Areas around exhaust fans: Check for grease and ensure the containment device is working and clean.

#### Parking Lots

The long winter months can be brutal on parking lots. In the spring, a general inspection is necessary to see what maintenance is required to extend the life of the asphalt. Ignoring wear traits can be very costly both by the repair charges and increased liability for automobile damages and slips and falls.

Check the following items:

- Worn, discolored sealant: When the color has faded sufficiently and you can see the old, original pavement, it is time for another sealing application. The new sealer will protect the asphalt from the sun and help retain its flexibility.
- Fading parking lot striping: Restriping may be an option to maintain a safe lot. New, highly visible lines reduce the risks of car accidents and protect against liability issues. If restriping, check to ensure it meets ADA compliance.
- Cracks in asphalt: These could have developed from contraction during the cold months, followed by expansion in warmer weather. The cracks need to be sealed to keep water out. Check with a local contractor for asphalt crack repair.
- Potholes: When cracks go unnoticed or untreated, potholes develop. At this point, a professional asphalt repair company will need to be contacted to fix all holes. This is a very serious issue that needs to be taken care of as soon as possible to keep your customers and employees safe.

#### Irrigation System

Spring is the time to ensure the irrigation system is working properly and not wasting precious water or energy.

Check the following:

- Irrigation control: Ensure the date/ time and start/ stop times are set properly. Check the battery back-up, if applicable.
- Remove dirt/obstructions from the sprinkler heads.
- Check for proper sprinkler nozzle operations. Replace broken/ worn heads as needed.
- Check valves for proper operation and/or leakage.
- Check incoming water pressure to protect system components.

#### Landscape and Lighting

Spring is the time to trim any overgrown vegetation and lay down fresh mulch. This will keep your facility looking sharp and help maintain ground moisture. Also, check time-clock operations for exterior lighting to save money and help keep the facility safe.

I'm always looking for feedback, so please feel free to contact me at [jeff@rfmaonline.com](mailto:jeff@rfmaonline.com) or (972) 805-0905, x3.

Dover and out!

Jeff Dover's facilities career started in 1985. He has been employed by several major chains (Ponderosa, Steak & Ale, Bennigan's, TGI Friday's, Fuddrucker's and recently Five Guys Burgers and Fries). His technical education enabled him to take the lead as Energy Manager, Facilities Manager and Director of Facilities at the various brands.