

Facilitator — April/May 2013



Change La

Here Comes the Sun

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While you may not exactly be out of the cold season just yet, the warmer months are just around the corner. It is always best to get out a encounter in your restaurant, and the damage that the winter elements brings with it, to avoid costly repairs in the future.

Think about all the critical points in your systems, as well as the building itself, that may have become compromised as a result of the ic you are hopefully about to leave behind.

You may not be able to easily identify everything you should inspect off the top of your head, so here are a few things you should take sure you take all the necessary safety precautions. If you're on a ladder, make sure it is stable and have another person holding it. Dc without making sure it is disabled and disconnected from its power source. The signs you are looking for will be visible for the most part, around. Leave the more thorough inspections to your contracted service providers.

Your Roof

Cold weather can take a heavy toll on a roof, so it is important to take the opportunity to do a thorough inspection. Be certain you inc metal and the seals around each and every roof penetration in your review. A weakened seal around any of these can, and likely will, f not immense amounts of dry rot and damage with continued exposure.

Check around all roof penetrations to ensure they are sealed. Take a good look at the parapet caps to make sure they are intact and all s

Cold weather is no friend of rubber and silicone-based products, so while you are up on your roof you should check your gutters for le weak points in your drainage system tends to result in pools on the sidewalk or moisture that works its way down the siding of the build in expensive damage to your property or a hazardous situation requiring immediate attention.

Your Heating and AC Units

Inspect the drain lines of any heating/air conditioning units located on the roof. The heating unit was used quite extensively over the la: may be showing some signs of wear.

Snow and ice can crack or break drain lines made of PVC, so walk those lines and inspect them for weak points and visible damage Puddles are key indicators that a leak is present, so follow up with the HVAC maintenance vendor.

While you are looking at these rooftop units, be sure to check their access doors to make sure the gaskets are in good shape. Proper m ensure no strange odors from outside the restaurant will be cycled in through the system. It is also a very good idea to inspect the filter: sure they are all intact and clean. Regular inspection of your filters will keep your system operating at optimum levels and help minir breakdowns.

Refrigerant Lines and Exhausts

Next, take a look at the refrigerant lines for the coolers and ice machines that run to the remote condensing units. As temperatures begir to be put under increased strain. Get them in good working order before you find yourself in a compromised position.

Inspect the insulation on these lines to confirm it is still intact after the months of exposure to the elements. Open the hood exhaust to m and functioning properly. The exhaust system is often neglected during the winter months, so perform a close inspection to evalu determine a course of action to restore it to proper working order. Keep in mind these units can be dangerous, so watch where you pl visual inspections are key. Leave the physical investigation to your contracted service professional.

The Grounds

Remember that first impressions count. A customer may never realize that the damage from a downspout spread within the walls, but t on the outside and any number of other aesthetic hints that may mar your outer shell. Recognize these trouble areas early, and get ou your customers' satisfaction levels, and possibly save you thousands in potential damages in the long run.

Begin by checking for damage to exterior finishes; look for cracked paint, softened wood trims and damaged mortar. If water has foun and froze, it will have left behind gaps where moisture will accumulate and damage the substrate and building sheeting. The risk in not a is the possibility of injury or harm to customers and employees who might be hit by falling pieces of rock or finish.

Inspect the mortar joints of any brick siding to ensure they are not cracked, flaking or damaged. Check all the window seals for cracked you should check all the door sweeps and weather seals to ensure they are tight and in good shape. Making sure the seals are all intac operating at optimum levels and minimize wasted electricity.

Look for areas that need to be sealed to prevent pests, as with warm weather comes a gravitation of insects and smaller rode environments. Take the time to thoroughly inspect painted buildings for cracked caulk and soft wood under the paint. The wood und noticeable, and the situation can quickly escalate to extreme levels of damage.

The mechanical or storage rooms need to be inspected in the same manner as the rest of the building. Check for roof leaks or gaps and unwanted pests to gain access to the building. Examine any areas where chemicals are being stored and look for signs of moistu addressed immediately, as many of the industrial-strength chemicals may prove extremely dangerous when exposed to the el environment. Protection of your employees and your customers is of paramount importance.

The Sidewalks and Pavement

Walk all the sidewalks, carefully inspecting them and looking for missing joint materials. It is important to repair these flaws for the safety. The sidewalks need to be well sealed to keep water from getting under the slab. Pressure wash the sidewalk to remove old salt and seal the sidewalks after they are cleaned.

Be careful not to use caustic or acid-based chemicals on the sidewalks if you are not sealing them. Muriatic acid will cause the sidewalk to get dirty twice as fast and be hard to keep clean. Sealing the sidewalk is like putting scotch guard on the concrete.

Last but not least, walk the entire property. Examine the parking lot and look for signs of cracks or holes starting to form. Address any problems now, as they will only get bigger over time. Recognize that before too long, the irrigation system will need to be activated, so make sure you and that the heads are properly adjusted and functioning. Walk the landscape with your maintenance vendor and discuss the expectations.

Inside the Building

Moving to the inside of the building, you should do a very simple air-balance test. Make sure the AC fan, as well as all make-up air fans, are in position and running. Once you are sure they are all operating, just crack the front door. If you have outside air rushing in through the cracks, you have a negative air balance, which can open up a world of problems, the worst of which is mold. When hot humid air gets pulled in from the outside, it eventually shows up as moisture inside the walls. If the insulation becomes damp, it will immediately become a hospitable environment for mold. Moisture will begin to rot the walls from the inside out.

Walk the entire inside perimeter of your building, using a flashlight and moving booths or tables when necessary, and check for signs of water around the windows for any signs of water getting in and closely examine the insulated glass (IG) units. Almost all windows will be IG units. The space between them that are sealed around the edges and filled with a gas. If the seal fails, then the window loses its insulation and will allow in moisture. Windows in this condition need to be replaced in a timely fashion. They are a weak point in your environmental controls and can cause problems in the long run.

The last part of this simple check is to get a ladder and remove some of the ceiling tiles throughout the restaurant to check the roof deck for any signs of leaks or damage. If you detect any moisture in the ceiling area, address it immediately. Damage from moisture will spread, and addressing the issue is only going to raise the cost of repair and replacement.

Throughout this process, be sure to remember that it is to your advantage to be as thorough as possible when evaluating the condition. Even how small a problem you uncover, it will never get any better over time. That, compounded by the possibility of lost revenue, can add to the financial repercussions in the long run.

It may only take a small amount of time and resources to recognize and correct an issue right now, but failure to do so can result in taking the business down the road.