

Workplace Safety – Religious

Boiler Inspections and Maintenance

Boiler malfunctions can result in claims amounting to millions of dollars, not to mention the risk of injury to anyone nearby when the incident occurs. When heating systems are not properly maintained, failure of the system can result in fire, explosion, frozen pipes, water damage or worse. Basic maintenance and a qualified service provider help to ensure uninterrupted service and safety. To keep your systems operating smoothly and safely, consider the following tips.

Inspections and Preventative Maintenance

- Develop a regular inspection and maintenance program for all buildings. Annual heating system maintenance can be performed by a local service firm that can also respond to emergencies. Assign weekly inspection duties to a competent person. Maintain a written record of each inspection and maintenance visit by keeping a log. The log should be maintained in the maintenance office or in an area that is not in the vicinity of the boiler. If there is an explosion, the log will most likely be destroyed if it is near the boiler.
- Make sure that furnaces are equipped with an emergency shutoff switch that is located in an accessible area. Ensure that the switch is accessible and well marked for emergency use.

Weekly Inspections

- Check the boiler or furnace room for cleanliness. Remove unnecessary combustibles and maintain 36 in. clearance between heating appliances and any combustibles. Ensure that equipment is unobstructed.
- Check the boiler or furnace room for water leaks and excessive fuel odors. Observe proper firing, if possible.
- Verify that pressures and temperatures are within allowable limits.
- Check the fuel oil storage tank; schedule delivery, if necessary.

Monthly Inspections

- Manually test boiler low-water cutoff.
- Manually test safety relief valve.

Annual Inspections

- Test all safety and pressure relief valves.
- Test all combustion safety controls (i.e., safety shutoff valves, fuel-air interlocks, and flame failure devices).
- Clean the firesides and flue to prevent soot accumulation.
- Disassemble and clean low-water cutoff.
- Analyze combustion burner efficiency.
- Check steam traps for proper functioning.

Before Cold Weather Arrives and During Cold Spells

- Check windows, doors, and skylights to ensure they close securely to maintain

building heat. Repair cracked or broken windows and doors—especially if near water pipes.

- Set thermostats to maintain a temperature of at least 45° F. Post instructional signs at all thermostats.
- Place thermometers in colder areas such as under sinks where water pipes are located and where building heat may not reach. Monitor temperatures to ensure they don't drop below 40° F in these areas.
- Verify that boiler fuel oil supplies are sufficient; schedule a delivery or arrange for automatic deliveries.
- Visit the building on very cold days and nights, if the building is unoccupied that day. Failure of a heating system during unattended periods often goes undetected.

Loss of Electrical Power

- In the event that power is lost for an extended period of time, monitor temperatures and open faucets or drain water pipes to prevent freezing. Never use unapproved heaters or open flames or torches to thaw frozen pipes.

Regulatory Compliance

- Verify that boiler operating, fuel storage or other required certificates are current and properly posted.

-Information excerpted from www.insuranceboard.org/losscontrol.php and www.hilbornlaw.com/RougePlant/boilers.htm.

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