

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC: PROPERTY LOSS PREVENTION

## Food, Including Warehousing/Distribution

At FM Global we remain committed to providing our clients with the best property loss prevention advice to keep your facilities resilient and safe, particularly during these challenging times. Industry is adapting rapidly to the new demands caused by these challenges. These can have an impact on property risks and resulting business interruption. The particular trends in the food industry we are observing are:

- Increased hazards from modification of operations to provide high-demand products such as hand sanitizer, or changes in storage arrangements
- Shortage of experienced staff owing to rostering requirements or due to illness
- Equipment maintenance is affected by increased production demands
- Idled facilities are susceptible to freeze hazards while idled and can experience losses upon startup

### PROPERTY LOSS PREVENTION ADVICE

To assist you in your efforts to mitigate the potential impact of these risks in this sector, the following loss prevention advice will help keep your properties resilient and safe.

- Modification of operations and storage:
  - **Hazard Assessment (HA):** Conduct a formal HA for any changes to existing production operations aimed at increasing production rates or any additions of new production lines. The HA should include defining how speeding up or adding new production lines may impact any ovens, environmental control equipment, increases in the quantity or change in type of ignitable liquids being used and generation rates of combustible dusts.
  - **Construction:** Use noncombustible materials for any temporary ceilings, walls or barriers to separate modified operations and ensure fire protection equipment is not obstructed.
- **Electrical:** Route temporary electrical supplies to equipment to minimize exposure to forklifts or other mechanical damage and ensure adequate electrical protection is provided (properly sized circuit breaks, fault protection, etc.).
- **Ignitable Liquids:** Ensure adequate arrangement/protection of new or modified ignitable liquids operations, including:
  - » Use of ignitable liquids in areas where ignitable liquids were not previously present
  - » Use of lower flash point or increased volume of ignitable liquids in existing ignitable liquids operations
  - » Introduction of plastic intermediate bulk containers (IBCs) or temporary storage tanks
  - » Arrangement of temporary ignitable liquids transfer operations (pumps, hoses, safety interlocks, etc.)
- **Combustible Dust:** Ensure adequate arrangement/protection of dust-producing operations, including:
  - » Containment and collection of combustible dust, especially dust liberated via temporary or manual operations
  - » Proper location, isolation, and protection of new/temporary dust collection systems
  - » Housekeeping operations to safely remove any liberated combustible dust accumulations on the building or equipment



- **Storage:** Ensure adequate fire protection of raw materials and ingredients, in process material, or finished goods due to:
  - » Increased on-floor storage heights
  - » Storage of materials in aisles between racks
  - » Storage in non-warehouse areas of production facilities
  - » Storage in third-party or leased warehouses
- Shortage of experienced staff:
  - Ensure experienced operators and staff are rostered on all additional shifts.
  - Provide training for staff required to take on new roles.
  - Ensure Emergency Operating Procedures are established, training is provided, and operators are given the authority to act/shut down in an emergency condition.
  - Update business continuity plans.
  - Ensure managers with decision-making authority are available 24/7 to allow repair crews on-site to conduct unscheduled crucial repairs. If repairs are needed, ensure hot work precautions are enforced.
  - Reinforce and heighten cyber resilience awareness.
- Equipment maintenance:
  - Mitigate effects of delayed production equipment maintenance through equipment monitoring, vibration analysis, infrared inspections, etc.
  - Oven/dryer ductwork, dust collection, and vapor extraction equipment may require additional maintenance due to increased production (e.g., increased changing of filters, more frequency inspection/cleaning of ductwork, etc.).
  - Ensure maintenance and monitoring continues for refrigeration/freezer systems and critical equipment parts are spared.
  - Ensure safety device maintenance and testing is continued (combustion safety controls and interlocks, slip switches, etc.).
  - Ensure fire protection equipment inspection, testing, and maintenance is continued (i.e., fire pump tests, sprinkler valve

inspections, waterflow alarms, etc.). Note that this testing may normally be conducted by non-employee personnel for which access to the facility is now limited.

- Idled facilities:
  - For idled facilities subject to freezing conditions ensure adequate heat, building integrity, etc. are maintained.
  - Ensure there are on-site personnel, periodic rounds of the facility, or remote monitoring to identify loss of building heat or other issues.
  - Conduct pre-startup inspections prior to resuming operations – especially if operations have been idled (including “warm idle”) for a considerable time.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

These FM Global resources can provide you with additional information:

- Data Sheet 1-0, *Safeguards During Construction, Alteration and Demolition*
- P0309, *Understanding the Hazard – Alteration, Demolition, and Construction Operations*
- Data Sheet 8-9, *Storage of Class 1, 2, 3, 4 and Plastic Commodities*
- Data Sheet 2-81, *Fire Protection System Inspection, Testing and Maintenance*
- Data Sheet 9-1, *Supervision of Property*
- P0274, *Understanding the Hazard – Idle, Vacant, or Strikebound Facilities*
- Data Sheet 9-18, *Prevention of Freeze-Ups*
- P0148, *Understanding the Hazard – Freeze*
- P9521, *Freeze-Up Checklist*
- Data Sheet 10-8, *Operators*
- P0195, *Understanding the Hazard – Operator Training*
- **Temporary Production of Hand Sanitizer**

For more information and methods for addressing loss prevention concerns at your facility, refer to the free resources on FM Global’s website at [fmglobal.com](http://fmglobal.com). FM Global and AFM clients can contact their account engineer.



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