



Insurer Responses To Covid-19

With a number of commercial premises temporarily shut as a result of Covid-19, insurers have provided an overview of their position as to how to deal with these vacancies. This is not an exhaustive list and as the situation develops this may change, however, the underlying position is that they would look for your best endeavors to maintain the best security possible and whilst maintaining a common sense approach within the permitted Government guidelines.

Please review your policy and refer to the insurer position as follows.

AXA

Properties vacant pre Covid-19 'situation' on or before 15.03.20

- Cover levels will remain as per those in place before the Covid-19 restrictions were put in place.
- Properties should be managed according to the stipulated/agreed requirements already in place, unless otherwise notified / agreed by AXA o AXA should be notified as soon as practicable of any circumstances where existing security provisions (e.g. manned guarding) are downgraded or removed due to changes in government guidance and / or the ability of clients or their suppliers to maintain support.

Properties becoming unoccupied or temporarily unoccupied due to Covid-19 'situation' on or after 16.03.20

- Full cover will be maintained for at least 60 days from 16.05.20.
- If current restrictions look likely to be in force beyond the 60-day period, AXA will publish advice on future requirements.
- These guidelines override any existing policy conditions and apply to any premises that are temporarily unoccupied due to restrictions resulting from Covid-19.
- Whilst the Covid-19 restrictions are ongoing, and where you are aware, you should continue to advise AXA of any changes in occupancy so that all parties can be prepared for when the Covid-19 restrictions will no longer apply.
- All policies include the Non-invalidation clause for exceptional circumstances (e.g. where changes in occupancy occur without awareness of the insured).

Fire/Security Alarm Testing and Fire Risk Assessments and Inspection requirements

- For Properties vacant pre Covid-19 'situation' on or before 15.03.20, you will need to comply with existing requirements and advise AXA immediately if this is no longer possible due to Covid-19 restrictions.
 - o Any risk management advice, testing and inspections that can be carried out in line with government guidelines and social distancing protocols must continue.
 - o This is particularly relevant to life-safety critical tests. Clients should speak to Fire & Rescue services for advice in the first instance for any questions around this aspect.

- For Properties becoming unoccupied or temporarily unoccupied due to Covid-19 'situation' on or after 16.03.20, full cover will be maintained for at least 60 days.
- All policies include the Non-invalidation clause for exceptional circumstances (e.g. non-execution of duties without awareness of the insured).

Risk Management Guidance

Businesses are now facing unprecedented additional challenges posed by measures to counter Covid-19 as premises are temporarily closed or staffing levels on site reduced to a minimum. Protection measures already in place such as intruder and fire alarms, automatic sprinklers and physical security should be maintained in effective working order. Additional measures may be necessary based on the risk assessments and individual circumstances of the risk.

Where it is practical and permitted by Government advice in the current situation, the following best practice Risk Management measures should be taken where possible:

- All activities must only be undertaken in line with the current guidance issued by HM Government
- <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- The current definition of critical worker includes regulated (license holding) security professionals
- Further guidance can also be found at <https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/topicsand-issues/coronavirus-qa/>

Please see our list of Risk Management recommendations for Properties becoming unoccupied or temporarily unoccupied due to Covid-19 'situation' on or after 16.03.20. These are best practice and should be taken as a guide as we appreciate that current circumstances may make the application of these difficult.

- **Site Security** – check perimeter fences and gates are in good state of repair and operational.
- **External lighting** – check lighting and any associated movement sensors are operational.
- **Building Physical Security** – check window and door locks plus any security shutters are operational. The use of external key safes should not be used.
- **Access Control** – check to ensure operational and maintained.
- **CCTV** – check to ensure operational and maintained including recording and any remote monitoring.
- **Intruder Alarm** – check to ensure fully operational and maintained including offsite remote monitoring. Reduction in Police response or keyholder availability to be advised to AXA.
 - o Where no CCTV or Intruder Alarm exists, consider temporary systems – AXA have exclusive arrangements in place with First Response Group to assist (axa@firstresponsegroup.com or 03300 415 008).
- **Automatic Sprinkler** – protection should remain fully operational and maintained. Weekly testing should continue where possible with guidance sought as to whether this can be supported whilst adhering to social distancing.
- **Automatic Fire Alarm** – check to ensure the system is fully operational and maintained including offsite remote monitoring.
- **Fire Doors** – ensure all internal fire doors and shutters are closed.
- **Letterboxes** – should be sealed.
- **Large Car Parks** – where vulnerable to incursion and potential fly-tipping, additional denial of access security measures should be considered including provision of 4.5-ton concrete blocks. AXA have exclusive arrangements in place with First Response Group to assist (axa@firstresponsegroup.com or 03300 415 008).

- **Inspections** – where the site is operational with limited staffing, an inspection should be carried out at the beginning and end of the working day.
- **Inspections** – where the site is temporarily unoccupied, where possible arrangements should be made for a weekly internal and external site inspection with guidance sought as to whether this can be supported whilst adhering to social distancing.
- **Waste** – internal and external waste to be removed from site and external storage located a minimum of 10m from the building.
- **Utilities** (electrical, water, heating) – shutdown and isolate/drain any non-essential utility services not required for operational reasons, maintaining minimum temperatures to prevent freezing or for protection.
- **Unattended Processes** – other than unattended processes already notified to AXA, other processes or machinery should not be run unsupervised. Where this needs to be considered, please supply details to AXA.
- **Hot Work** – non-essential hot work activity should cease unless a continuous fire watch can be maintained during and for at least 1 hour after the work ceases.
- **Maintenance** – the ongoing planned preventative maintenance regimes should continue especially for critical plant and machinery, utilities and protection equipment. Adjustment to maintenance or servicing may be appropriate (i.e. increased time between kitchen extract duct cleaning due to less use).

Tenants should be advised to contact their own business insurers to understand any specific measures that they wish to be taken.

Aviva

Temporarily Unoccupied Buildings

Firstly, what does ‘temporarily unoccupied’ mean. We would consider this to be where you have followed Government advice to close your Insured premises and it will be out of use for up to 30 consecutive days.

Secondly, there is no need to immediately notify AVIVA that your Insured Premises has closed temporarily due to the Covid-19 outbreak. In the event of your Insured Premises being out of use for longer than 45 consecutive days at Virgin Active, then you must notify us.

The following guidance will assist in protecting Business assets:

- You should inspect your Insured premises internally and externally at least once every 14 days, preferably 7 and keep a log.
- Risk assessments must be carried out on the changing risk/lack of supervision in place.
- Any and all hazardous processes to cease (and not run unmanned) and be shut down safely.
- Other processes should not be run if there is no adequate supervision; safety must not be comprised.
- Heating left on but other critical services powered down if not required, unless to support protection or detection systems.
- Drain all water and fuel supply tanks, apparatus and pipes.
- All external areas must be clear of waste and combustible materials.
- Consider waste build-up and the controls needed if waste collection services are affected.
- All fire protection, detection, and security systems to remain active and monitored remotely where possible.

- Adequacy of security controls should be assessed based on likely periods of unoccupancy and type of business, particularly in high-crime areas.
- Secure and seal all letter boxes and openings and redirect post if necessary.
- Consideration should be given to accumulation of vehicles, proximity to buildings, and their security when premises are unattended.
- Perimeter security, fences and lighting are in good condition and operational.
- All physical security and locking devices are working and in place.
- All protection and detection systems are operational.
- There are no leaking fluids or spills.
- Any unsafe conditions are identified and remedied.

Ageas

Most of our products and schemes have unoccupancy conditions that set out what cover will be maintained including; when that will be restricted, and what actions policyholders need to undertake. Where any premises becomes temporarily unoccupied as a consequence of COVID-19, we'll not restrict cover from the time the unoccupancy starts, until such time as the restrictions on premises being used or occupied are lifted. This is subject to policyholders applying appropriate best endeavors to manage their premises, including appropriate security measures while they are closed, and adhering to governmental advice and action. You don't need to notify us of the unoccupancy, where it occurs as a result of COVID-19. This amended approach will apply for the next 60 days (from 24 March 2020). We may (subject to review) extend this period further.

Allianz

Unoccupied Premises

Given the current situation, we appreciate that your customers may have had to temporarily leave their premises unoccupied due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

We usually ask that you notify us if the premises are going to be unoccupied for more than 30 consecutive days for Allianz Commercial standard policy wordings, or 45 days for SME wordings. We're now extending this period to 60 days, so you only need to let us know at the end of the 60 day period if the premises will still be unoccupied. During that 60 day period your customer's existing cover will remain in place.

If your customer's premises were already unoccupied before the Covid-19 outbreak, and your customer is unable to meet the terms of our unoccupied conditions due to the current restrictions, please get in touch with St Giles.

Covea

Where Premises under our Commercial and Residentially-let Policies have had to become temporarily unoccupied due to Covid-19 restrictions announced by the Government, brokers and customers will not need to advise us of the temporary unoccupied status of the property, and the existing level of cover will continue for a period of 90 consecutive days from the date the Premises was closed.

Risk Management requirements will still apply after 45 consecutive days of temporary unoccupancy, with the exception of compulsory inspection at times when customers are unable to do so safely. Customers will be required to inspect such Premises when they are next able to do so safely around this period, and maintain logs of this activity.

Where unoccupancy is not due to Covid-19, normal Policy Conditions apply.
For any queries not covered by this statement, agreement from us is required.

Risk Management Guidance

- **Waste** – Remove all external waste, pallets and empty skips before closure of the premises.
- **Waste bins** – Empty all waste bins and move to a secure area, ideally at least 10 metres from the building. If it is not possible to keep at least 10 metres then these bins should have lockable lids.
- **Fire Systems** – Ensure all fire and/or sprinkler systems remain fully operational.
- **Fire Doors** – Check to ensure that internal fire doors are closed.
- **Building Utilities** – Ensure all non-essential electrical devices and building utilities are turned off.
- **Inspections** – Arrange for a weekly inspection of the building (internally and externally), risk assess for any lone working issues. Comply with existing government guidance regarding vulnerable people and lone worker risk assessments. Consider the provisioning for alternative skilled personnel.
- **Physical Security** – Check that physical security measures are in place and effective. For example, fences are fit for purpose and in good repair, windows are locked, shutters are in place, gates are locked.
- **Intruder Alarm** – Set Intruder alarms and ensure that the remote signalling is in place. Make sure there are a sufficient number of key holders available to respond to an activation within 20 minutes.
- **Maintenance** – As long as it is practical, continue essential maintenance and complete any remedial measures. Continue to respond to all Building Management Systems (BMS) alerts.

NIG

Within NIG's standard policies, cover will continue to be in force for any Commercial premises temporarily unoccupied for a period of up to 30 consecutive days, and 90 days for premises insured under our Property Owners contract. From 24th March 2020, we are extending this period to 90 consecutive days for Commercial premises and maintaining the same period of 90 days for Property Owners temporarily closing during to COVID-19, before we ask to be notified. For any clients whose premises is going to be out of use for longer than this, you need to notify us using your normal NIG contacts.

Any building left unoccupied naturally poses a greater insurance risk and we therefore need businesses to take the following additional measures for the above extension to apply:

That the Premises is secured, by putting all protective, locking devices and any alarm protection, in effective operation.

Where practical, turn off the gas, water and electricity supplies at the mains (except electricity needed to maintain any fire or intruder alarm systems, or water and heating systems for sprinklered Premises).

Where possible, the Insured or their representative should visit once every 7 days to physically check the premises and carry out immediately any work necessary to maintain the security of the premises in all respects.

Remove all trade refuse and waste materials from the interior of the Premises, allowing no accumulation of refuse or waste in the adjoining yards or spaces owned by the Insured.

All other Conditions requiring Policyholders to take action or respond to intruder alarm activations, faults or other maintenance-related matters will continue to apply unless otherwise agreed to be impractical due to COVID19 Government-directed actions limiting or restricting the movement of people.

QBE

Currently within our policies we have a condition that relates to unoccupied buildings, which we will seek to maintain for current vacant premises, prior to the Coronavirus outbreak. However, for any properties that are temporarily unoccupied as a result for the Coronavirus outbreak we would seek to provide the following assurance.

During the Coronavirus outbreak, and for the period of Government required closure of any premises, the following policy operations will apply:

- The unoccupied building conditions within the policy will not apply for any impacted property and we will not be taking any further measures to restrict coverage.
- Should any premises remain unoccupied once any applicable Government restrictions are lifted, we would consider any such property to be subject to the unoccupied building conditions of the policy after a period of 7 days. With this in mind please note the Other Considerations section of the Risk Management advice contained herein as well as advice from your broker.
- Any inspection provisions within the policy are waived during the period of Government restrictions, other than those deemed to be required for statutory purposes.
- If during the Coronavirus outbreak, you repurpose your premises to undertake different activities please contact QBE or your broker to discuss this further.

In consideration of the above, we would also wish to advise policy holders of our best practice risk management advice for temporarily unoccupied premises during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Risk Management Advice

Equipment and Building Utilities

- Ensure all equipment is safely turned off and, in a condition, where it can be left for an extended period without damage or degradation.
- Remove from or drain processing equipment of flammable, combustible or hazardous liquids and materials. These should be appropriately disposed of or stored safely for re-use.
- Isolate electrical circuits where you can (without affecting security, CCTV or fire systems).
- Turn off the mains water supply. Make sure this does not isolate any sprinkler or other fire systems you have.
- Don't worry too much about draining heating or other stored water systems but if possible isolate storage / header tanks from any distribution pipework.
- If it is safe to do so, isolate the incoming gas supply.
- Make a list of all services or other valves you have isolated (and where they are) to ensure you reinstate them all.

Fire Systems/Doors

- Ensure that any fire and/or sprinkler systems are fully operational.
- Carry out a check to ensure that internal fire doors are closed.
- Check that the fire alarm panel is fault free and all fire detection systems are fully operational.

Waste

- Remove all external waste, pallets and empty skips ahead of closing.
- Empty all waste bins and relocate to a secure area, ideally at least 10 metres from the building. If this is not possible and bins and skips are within 10metres, these should have lockable lids.

Physical Security

- Carry out a check to ensure physical security measures are in place e.g. fences are in good repair, windows are locked and boarded if appropriate, shutters are in place where appropriate, gates and doors are locked, and letter boxes secured closed.
- Shop fronts with no internal or external roller shutters to have shop front displays cleared of stock.
- Make sure your intruder alarm is set and that the remote signalling is in place.
- Ensure sufficient numbers of keyholders are available to respond to an alarm activation within 20 minutes, and any other building management system alarm that may be triggered.

Other Considerations

- It is also prudent to consider the following for any planned longer-term building closure;
 - o Awareness of vacant property management companies.
 - o Removal of high value or critical equipment to a secure location.
 - o Additional building security features (boarding windows etc).
 - o Further isolation of building services and draining down of wet systems.
 - o Clearly posted emergency contact details.

Travelers

Travelers Insurance Company Limited (TICL) recognises that many of our customers have been forced to close or conduct only limited operations due to the unprecedented government directions in response to COVID-19.

For the purpose of applying the unoccupancy exclusions and conditions in our policies, TICL has decided not to count the days that a building is unoccupied solely because of government directions due to COVID-19. This decision will continue until the earlier of the following:

- The date on which the government directions due to COVID-19 are lifted; or
- 1 June 2020.

Please note that whether a building is unoccupied and the application of coverage depends on the facts and circumstances of each loss, all applicable policy provisions, and any applicable law. It should also be noted that the decision to provide temporary relief from the application of unoccupancy exclusions and conditions does not extend to any other term or condition, and this decision does not amend, or otherwise affect, the provisions or coverages of any insurance policy issued by Travelers. Nor is it a representation that coverage does or does not exist for any particular claim or loss under any such policy.

Wherever reasonable, and where it is permissible within the government guidance, insureds should be proactive in protecting their properties.

With immediate effect this direction remains in place until 1 June 2020. Travelers will continue to monitor the situation and communicate any decisions to extend this direction after 1 June 2020.

Finally, please continue to notify Travelers when buildings are unoccupied.

This information is to be used only to provide a description of how coverage may apply in relation to Coronavirus. This information does not amend, or otherwise affect, the coverage, terms or conditions of any policy.

This information is not a representation that coverage does or does not exist for any particular claim or loss under any policy. Coverage depends on the facts and circumstances involved in the claim or loss, all applicable policy terms and conditions, and any applicable law.

Zurich

It is our intention that where buildings are temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, our Unoccupied Conditions will not apply and we will not be taking any further measures to restrict coverage.

Zurich recognise the challenges faced by our customers as buildings are forced to close or operate on a limited basis going forward.

Customers should continue to follow the risk management advice below and where possible the existing provisions of physical security and monitoring should remain in place:

- New Construction Sites Closure
- Temporary Closure of Buildings
- Temporary Closure of Buildings undergoing Refurbishment
- Partial Closure of Buildings

We would encourage continued/daily onsite presence and if provisions exist for building closures already, i.e.. procedures taken during holiday periods, then these procedures should be taken forward during this unprecedented time. Where a site usually has a 24/7 presence and there are not adequate measures on site in the event of unoccupied closure (such as the absence of an intruder alarm) then please refer to your broker.

If you are unclear on any aspect or have any additional questions please don't hesitate to speak to the team.



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