

THE PROTECTOR

A QUARTERLY PROPERTY LOSS CONTROL NEWSLETTER

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MASTER-PLANNING OR CONSIDERING BUILDING?

CONDUCT A FACILITY ASSESSMENT FIRST

Is your property starting to show its age? Maybe you have a growing workforce – or, need a more functional space to suit your specific needs. Or maybe you're developing a master plan and need to budget for expansion five or 10 years down the road.

To do that, you need to know where you stand today.

What is a Facility Assessment?

A facility assessment is completed by interviewing building occupants & decision makers, site walk-throughs, review of original building plans and research into the building's past. This information is collated into a single, cohesive report. With a property condition report, facility managers, project owners, and other stakeholders can make informed decisions about the full scope of existing conditions of a facility. When there is discussion about expansion and changes to a facility, this facility assessment is critical in determining whether to fix what they have in the short term, add on, or build new based on accurate data and information.

A building assessment is a service often conducted by architects, engineers, or a construction manager from a design/build firm. They will ask questions and meticulously examine the following areas of your real estate.

Exterior Condition Reports

Because of its exposure to the elements, it's not uncommon for the exterior of a building to show condi-

tion issues sooner than the inside.

Building Facade

When examining the exterior of a building, the inspection will identify physical condition issues, especially those related to water damage. Buildings made of stone or brick may have joints or sealants that need repairs or replacement. The need for tuck-pointing is quite common in older brick buildings and must be done to uphold the integrity of a building's exterior.

Foundation

The inspector will look for foundation cracks, staining, or mold which may indicate water damage due to poor drainage. Regrading of the surrounding landscape may be recommended along with the addition of gutters and downspouts. Major foundation damage could threaten the structural integrity of a building and require significant repairs.

Roof

Flat roofs are common in commercial structures, but are notorious for having water ponding issues when improperly installed. Whether flat, or sloped, roofs can have numerous issues including:

- » Worn or damaged roofing materials
- » Improperly installed flashing around skylights, chimneys, roof edges, etc.
- » Leaking in valleys (where two roof lines meet)
- » Ice dams in northern climates
- » Improperly sealed pipes and drains



Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation



ABOUT THE COUNTY MUTUAL

The Wisconsin County Mutual Insurance Corporation (County Mutual) provides public entity liability, workers' compensation, and property insurance solely to Wisconsin counties.

ABOUT COMMUNITY INSURANCE CORPORATION

Community Insurance Corporation (CIC) provides liability, workers' compensation, and property insurance to Wisconsin school districts and local units of government.

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CHIEF'S CORNER



CHIEF BRIAN HARBISON
FOX CROSSING FIRE DEPARTMENT



The Town of Menasha Fire Department began as a small, volunteer department serving two communities and has grown into a professional, combination fire department made up of 71 career, part-time, and paid-on-call personnel that proudly serve the Village of Fox Crossing's 14 square miles and over 19,000 residents. In 2016, the TMFD changed its name to the **FOX CROSSING FIRE DEPARTMENT** as part of the town's incorporation into a village. The FCFD provides fire, rescue, and emergency medical services (EMS) out of two fire stations with four engines, one aerial platform truck, one heavy rescue, three command cars, and one utility vehicle. The FCFD prides itself in taking a proactive approach to fire prevention by maintaining very active code enforcement and public education programs.

The Village of Fox Crossing is located in Northeast Wisconsin in Winnebago County, approximately 30 miles south of Green Bay and 100 miles north of Milwaukee. Fox Crossing covers approximately 14 square miles with a population of 19,029 residents. The Village's identity, "Bridging the Fox Cities," reflects the fact that the Village is located on both the east and west sides of Little Lake Butte des Morts (part of the Fox River) and is connected by the Roland Kampo Bridge with State Highway 10/441. The Village is bordered by the City of Menasha to the east; the Town of Neenah and the City of Neenah to the south; the Town of Clayton to the west; and the towns of Greenville and Grand Chute, and the City of Appleton, to the north.

From 2015 - 2019, the village experienced a tremendous reconstruction project of the three major highway interchanges with multiple lanes on each and several fly-overs that connect in the heart of the jurisdiction. Also included in the project was the construction of a new bridge (in addition to the current one) over Little Lake Butte des Morts (Fox River) that expanded the highway to a total of six lanes to accommodate the increasing traffic volume.

As part of the town's incorporation into a village, the Town of Menasha Fire Department crossed a critical milestone in 2016 and changed to the Fox Crossing Fire Department. This coincided with the new Village of Fox Crossing. From the fire department's perspective, not a lot changed with this. As time passed, the department began seeing increased response times due to a lack of availability on the weekends from the paid-on-call staff. In September of 2019, the department received a Staffing for Ad-



equate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grant. This grant allowed for three positions to be staffed over a 60 hour time period from Friday evening through Monday morning. In January of 2020, the weekend staffing program began. This program used the current part-time and paid-on-call personnel to staff one engine company out of Station 40 all weekend.

Today, the department has two engine crews (one at each station) during the day on Monday thru Friday from 0800 through 1630, and one engine company out of headquarters starting at 1800 on Friday evening and ending at 0600 on Monday morning (with paid on call support from home). The department remains at paid on call only staffing levels on Monday thru Thursday evenings and responds to approximately 1200 calls annually.

CBRF STRUCTURE FIRE

I wanted to highlight an incident that FCFD responded to on June 18th 2020 for a structure fire at 1700 Midway Rd. This facility is known as a CBRF (community based residential facility), with 56 residents living in the facility under fulltime care of the LPN/RN's. All of the residents were not mobile and needed complex equipment for their quality of life such as breathing machines, heart monitors, and IV medication administration.

Upon our arrival the structure showed light colored smoke with active evacuation plans initiated. Fire crews quickly set up an offensive interior attack operation but soon after transitioned to a defensive operation due to the rapid spread of fire in concealed spaces. Fortunately all residents were evacuated safely to the

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WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW



BUILDER'S RISK COVERAGE

What is Builder's Risk Insurance?

Builder's risk insurance protects against direct physical loss to building materials and personal property you own during building renovation or construction.

- » Direct physical loss includes but is not limited to fire, wind, theft, hail, lightning, vandalism, etc.
- » Design Error is not a Builder's Risk claim; it's an Errors and Omissions Claim.
- » Personal Property includes building contents, equipment and supplies, drawings and plans, and personal property you own in the care and custody of the builder or subcontractor, if intended for use in the construction or occupancy of the building and structures.
- » Personal Property does not include property of any kind owned by the contractors.

Do I automatically have Builder's Risk coverage through my property policy?

Many property insurance carriers provide a basic level of builder's risk insurance coverage through their property policy form. However, some don't, and those that do apply sublimits to the coverage as well as coverage extensions.

You may ask why does the carrier apply a sublimit or coverage extensions to the builder's risk coverage available through their property policy form? Further, you may be quick to think the carrier is doing this to get more premium.

The truth is that the carrier (if offered) is being generous with the insurance coverage offered to you. In essence, they are providing coverage for an unknown exposure. The carrier is attempting to be a steward to the insured, but also needs to protect itself from significant loss. Thus, full limit coverage without coverage extensions isn't offered through the property policy form.

The County Mutual and Community Insurance Corporation provides \$2,000,000 in coverage through the property policy form with applicable coverage extensions.

What if my property policy form doesn't offer builder's risk coverage or the coverage sublimit is low?

Contact your insurance carrier and ask about options.

The County Mutual and Community Insurance Corporation offers builder's risk coverage up to the project value via endorsement to the property policy form.

You will be asked to provide information about your renovation/construction project, e.g., name of the project, start date, estimated date of completion, location of the project, and value of the project.

This information is utilized by underwriting to quote the applicable premium for the endorsement.

Who is required to carry builder's risk coverage? The Owner or the General Contractor?

Most of the time, the owner is required to carry the builder's risk coverage, but this is 100% negotiable between you and your general contractor. It comes down to the terms of your contract.

In many cases, large general contractors have access to builder risk coverage through a blanket policy, meaning all of their projects are covered under one policy. They have access to a blanket policy as they have developed a rapport with their insurance carrier and are familiar/comfortable with the work the general contractor performs continuously. The carrier knows the risk; thus, the obtainment of coverage is more affordable.

Another positive to requiring the general contractor to carry the coverage is the risk is transferred through their insurance vs. your own. In the end, if losses occur, the loss shows on their loss history, not yours— **you have a lower premium with good loss history.**

Questions

Please feel free to reach to the County Mutual and Community Insurance Corporation with any questions or comments. We are happy to help! 🙌

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LESSONS LEARNED:

PREVENTING THEFT ON CONSTRUCTION SITES



Unfortunately, construction site theft is a frequent occurrence. It is recognized as a growing concern in the United States. According to experts, between one and four billion dollars' worth of materials, tools, equipment, appliances, and more are stolen each year. This number continues to rise annually, and the costs associated with these losses are increasing because of the recent spikes in building material prices. According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), only a quarter of reported stolen equipment is usually recovered. In addition to the direct costs of replacing stolen goods, there is also the indirect costs associated, including:

- » Loss of productivity
- » Delays in production
- » Rental fees to replace stolen equipment
- » Increased insurance premiums
- » Possible cancellation of insurance

There are many reasons why construction sites are vulnerable to theft. The characteristics of construction sites make them a unique and different environment than most places. Construction sites are always in transition, meaning they exist only as temporary environments where construction occurs for a short amount of time before becoming a residence or business. This temporary environment can easily create a culture of minimal supervision and no clear ownership, impacting the opportunity for crime.

Construction sites consist of many different types of work conducted on-site by different contractors (and subs, and sub-subs) for different periods. When there is minimal concern for the site's appearance, construction equipment and materials, including scraps of materials that appear to be trash but could be valuable, are often left lying around, tempting individuals to trespass and take items. If theft prevention is not top-of-mind on these sites, employees may also be tempted to take unsecured property.

Best Practices

So what can you do to help prevent construction site theft?

1. **Clean site and properly store materials daily:** Potential thieves and vandals are more likely to target messy

construction sites where material, tools, and equipment are more easily identifiable and accessible. Easily transportable materials are more likely to be targeted. Site supervisors can make construction sites less desirable by keeping a clean and tidy site.

2. **Implement/install security measures:** A well-lit, fenced-in construction site with posted "no trespassing" signs is less likely to be targeted than one that is not. Installing security cameras provides a visible deterrent and increases the odds of recovering stolen materials and equipment.
3. **Store and secure materials and equipment:** Protect tools and building materials by locking them up in storage boxes and cargo trailers and keeping all keys central. The odds of more significant equipment being targeted are lower but can result in greater loss severity. Securing equipment can be as simple as removing batteries, lowering blades and buckets, or locks designed to immobilize controls to more high-tech options such as rules and ignition cut-off switches and GPS tracking devices.
4. **Register and track:** Properly labeling all construction equipment is the first step towards having a good overview of all the assets and detecting whether an item is misplaced or stolen. Additionally, organizations like the National Equipment Register enable heavy equipment registration to aid law enforcement in recovering and returning equipment to theft victims.

While not exhaustive, this list is a great starting point to help prevent construction site theft. Other best practices include:

- ↳ Enforcing a theft protection policy with all employees and subcontractors.
- ↳ Scheduling supply deliveries on an as-needed basis.
- ↳ Maintaining a consistent presence as a site supervisor.
- ↳ Monitoring the job site's access.
- ↳ Working with local police departments to increase their patrols in the area of the construction site.
- ↳ Engaging with neighbors in the area of the construction site (if applicable). 🗣️

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TOP TRENDS IN WORKPLACE FIRES CONTINUED

» And more

Interior Condition Reports

An assessment of the building's interior includes more than just structural features, it also includes spacial considerations and many of the systems that keep operations running.

Equipment

Mechanical systems in many larger facilities are common areas of concern. Items including HVAC, boilers, pumps, plumbing, electrical systems and other equipment are inventoried along with service records to show installation dates, repairs, and potential issues. Was a new furnace installed a couple years ago, or is it an aging system that's on its last leg? An assessment can help identify a system's expected life expectancy so owners can budget for it in the future as part of their master plan.

Accessibility

Are there enough restrooms to accommodate the number of employees now and as the company grows? Are the correct number of stalls properly sized and ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliant? Accessibility for those with limited mobility is coming under greater scrutiny, and inspectors will examine whether there are proper clearances around doors, threshold issues, or limited access to certain areas.

Interior Finishes

Condition issues with finishes like cabinetry, flooring, and tile will be documented, such as grout that is chipping or missing from grout lines. If there is extensive damage, the underlying cause will need to be investigated to determine whether it's related to structural issues or poor installation. Buildings that are more than 50 years old may contain asbestos or lead paint. These conditions will need to be remediated pending any construction or remodeling.

Life Safety

Safety issues are a major concern. Are there proper firewalls, are fire doors being propped open, and do they have proper labels that are clearly visible to fire inspectors? It's not uncommon for these labels to be painted over, resulting in potential fines. An inspector will also document if exit doors or signs are blocked, another major violation.

Energy Efficiency

A facility assessment will examine construction drawings and compare them to modern building codes to provide recommendations on improving energy efficiency. Some examples might include the addition of insulation, replacement windows and doors, or constructing thicker walls. Property owners need to weigh the pros and cons of some of these measures. Thicker walls, for ex-

ample, might lower the heating bill but will reduce usable square footage. Comparing utility bills from an aging building to a newly constructed one of the same type and size can be an eye opening exercise. It can also be used to prove how beneficial energy efficient upgrades might be and that payback periods might be much quicker than you think.

In addition to these issues, examiners might conduct space assessments to see whether a company is maximizing its square footage and making the best use of their space. For older buildings, research might be conducted to see if it's listed as a historic landmark. If it is, the owner might be eligible for grants to help finance a project if they are willing to adhere to certain preservation requirements.

What Happens After a Facility Assessment?

Once the facility assessment is completed, a report detailing the condition of a property will be compiled detailing the findings. Photos, descriptions, and floor plans might be used to identify areas and easily document any issues. Typically, the company that conducted the assessment will give a presentation to stakeholders, including board members, a facility manager, business owner, council members, etc.

The construction firm can also provide rough estimates for performing repairs and upgrades, or begin discussions on budgeting for a new facility so stakeholders can determine the goals of the project and identify the resources needed.



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CONTINUED

neighboring Church facility as per their evacuation plans.

Our department has Auto-aid agreements with our neighboring departments and all responded to the scene. FCFD is also a member of MABAS Division 123 in Winnebago County which has pre-determined box cards established for such incidents. The MABAS system was accessed at the box level which brought 5 additional departments to the scene. We set up operations on the "B" side of the structure and IC on the "A" side; staging was level 1 to the scene, and the EMS Branch was also on the "A" side. We utilized the Outagamie CERT team for rehab as the fire incident exceeded 9 hours in length.

My big take away for this type of call was to ensure you have good relationships established with your facilities and your neighbors! Our department is able to complete all of our commercial and industrial fire inspections annually and was well rehearsed with the features of this structure and its owners. We are fortunate in the Fox Valley to also have several area fire departments that work very well together and have a shared response daily. The use of MABAS was critical as the predetermined resources, dispatching frequencies, and overall chaos was very well managed which undoubtedly contributed to the success of the incident. Keep them safe! 🇺🇸

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