

Vacant Commercial Building: Owner's Risk & Insurance Checklist

Your Prevention First Guide from Stillwell Risk Partners

Notify Your Insurance Broker Immediately

- ☐ Tenant has moved out or will be moving out
- ☐ Broker notified within **7 days**
- ☐ Vacancy percentage confirmed (Is building more than 31% vacant?)
- ☐ Discuss conversion to **vacant-building insurance**
- ☐ Review carrier vacancy clauses + exclusions

Secure and Protect the Property

Exterior

- ☐ All doors locked & reinforced
- ☐ Broken windows boarded or repaired
- ☐ Exterior lighting functioning
- ☐ Motion lights or temporary cameras installed
- ☐ Parking lots maintained (plowed, lit, debris removed)

Interior

- ☐ Alarm system active
- ☐ Access limited to authorized personnel
- ☐ Utilities set to safe levels
- ☐ Mail stopped or redirected

Prevent Water and Property Damage

- ☐ Water shut off at main (if possible)
- ☐ Plumbing winterized
- ☐ Minimum heat maintained to prevent freezing
- ☐ Roof checked for leaks
- ☐ HVAC serviced or safely shut down
- ☐ Sump pumps inspected (if applicable)

Establish a Regular Inspection Schedule

- ☐ Weekly walkthroughs scheduled
- ☐ Inspection logs created (date, time, findings)
- ☐ Photos taken every visit
- ☐ Hazards corrected immediately
- ☐ Contractor/vendor visits documented

Address Liability Exposures

- ☐ Walkways, entrances, and stairs cleared
- ☐ Warning signs posted where needed
- ☐ Loose flooring, railings, or lighting repaired
- ☐ Adequate lighting inside and out
- ☐ Fencing or barriers installed for unsafe areas

Prepare for Longer Vacancies

- ☐ Leasing timeline reviewed
- ☐ Renovation or “make-ready” schedule planned
- ☐ Future use/occupancy communicated to broker
- ☐ Consider builder’s risk if updates planned
- ☐ Market conditions evaluated (office, industrial, retail)

Update Insurance Coverages

- ☐ Property coverage updated for vacancy
- ☐ Vandalism/malicious mischief included
- ☐ Theft coverage added (if available)
- ☐ Water damage options reviewed
- ☐ General liability active for visitors & contractors
- ☐ Debris removal, ordinance & law reviewed
- ☐ Adequate limits confirmed

Final Step: Protect Your Asset Before Problems Escalate

A vacant building can go from stable to severely damaged in a matter of hours. Most losses are preventable—and most coverage disputes are avoidable.

If your building is vacant or becoming vacant, contact me today.

Ryan Stillwell, CRM, Principal, Stillwell Risk Partners
610.671.3500 | ryan.stillwell@stillwellriskpartners.com