

CLOSING THE HOUSE FOR BREAKS

WINTER BREAK

Alumni and volunteer corporations must take care to close the house properly over the winter break. Several fires have occurred in SigEp chapter houses over the holiday season for a variety of reasons. The following checklist will help ensure that you are taking the necessary precautions to protect the facility over the winter break so that the property is ready for the undergraduates in January.

Winter break checklist:

- Service your furnace: Routine maintenance is critical and relatively inexpensive. In the long run, it will save you money. Your furnace will run more efficiently and be more dependable, which is critical during periods when there will be no one around to monitor its performance.
- Leave your furnace on and maintain the heat at 65 degrees.
- Shut off the water supply at the main valve and open the faucets. If your property is equipped with a fire sprinkler system, please check with the contractor to ensure its effectiveness is not compromised.
- Make sure all hoses are removed from exterior water spigots.
- Leave open the doors to cabinets that contain water lines. This will allow heat to enter the area.
- Check all rooms and unplug all non-essential appliances and electronics. The source of many fires was an improperly used, unattended, or malfunctioning appliance or space heater. If they are not plugged in, they are not a threat.
- Hire someone or utilize a responsible member or alumnus to check on the property, at a minimum, every 24 hours. Controlling the extent of a loss after an occurrence is critical. Make sure this designated person has the appropriate contact information. We recommend this person is provided with:
 - Alumni contact
 - A company such as ServiceMaster that can respond to extract the water and/or secure the property from sustaining further damage. You can locate a ServiceMaster franchise in your area by calling 1-800-RESPOND.
 - Insurance claim reporting information. **Members of the SigEp program can report a loss at our website, www.kirklin.com, or by calling 1-800-736-4327, extension (1) 215.**
- Make sure the property is securely locked and ask the local police department to check on it periodically to deter vandals and thieves. Don't forget to securely store all valuables!
- Clean the chapter house before the break. This will ensure that no heat registers are blocked and will reduce any potential fire hazards.

SUMMER BREAK

As the school year comes to an end, attention must also be paid to properly closing the chapter house for the summer months. Ideally, the house should be in the same condition it was in when it was opened in the fall. You can do a lot to ensure that this is the case by staying on top of facility maintenance and repair throughout the year and by beginning closing procedures at least one month before the doors are to be locked.

All keys should be collected by the alumni and volunteer corporation. If a key is not returned, the tenant's key deposit should be kept by the alumni and volunteer corporation.

The summer provides the alumni and volunteer corporation the opportunity to make major repairs to the facility if needed. Do not operate the property during the summer. The chapter facility should operate financially on a nine-month basis. The summer months should be viewed as a separate cost center. Too often alumni and volunteer corporations attempt to make up for lost revenue or put extra money away during the summer months and end up losing money and having additional repairs and maintenance costs. Use these months to make needed repairs.

PROPERTY INSPECTION

The undergraduate house manager and a representative from the alumni and volunteer corporation should walk through the property with a checklist from the beginning of the academic year. Damage to the common areas will be noted and repaired if feasible over the winter break. The cost of the repairs should be deducted from the common area security deposit account.

Each undergraduate should complete an inspection of his room with an alumni and volunteer corporation member. Damage should be noted and repaired if feasible over the break. The cost of the repairs will be deducted from the tenant's security deposit.

CLOSING THE CHAPTER HOUSE CHECKLIST

- Signed lease agreements are collected from all returning tenants.
- Ensure that all rooms are completely emptied of possessions and trash by tenants.
- Collect all keys from tenants.
- Contact the post office to have all mail forwarded or held during the summer.
- Discontinue garbage services, vendor services, etc.
- Have telephone service terminated or placed on "vacation rates."
- Be sure that working telephones are in locked rooms.
- Have natural gas service disconnected.
- Store and lock all equipment and furniture.
- Store and lock all trophies, composites, photos, awards, and other valuables.
- Disconnect refrigerator. (Consult your service man before doing so to make sure that damage will not occur to the motor.)
- Clean refrigerator and stoves thoroughly, and leave doors open to avoid mildew.
- Empty all trash from the house to eliminate fire and health hazards.
- Make arrangements to have all trash hauled away.
- Shut off all air-conditioning units.

- Check all locks on doors and windows.
- Repair any broken windows.
- All accounts receivable should be collected.
- All accounts payable should be paid.
- All safety equipment is checked and in working order.
 - Exit lights are operational.
 - Fire extinguishers are operational.
 - Sprinkler system is operational.
 - Additional fire suppression system in kitchen is operational (if applicable).
- Complete property inspection. Inventory equipment, furnishings, and amenities.
- Itemize all damage or repairs needed in individual and common areas.
- Return remainder of damage deposit to non-returning tenant.

NOTE: The facility should be closed for winter and summer breaks. Modify this list, and use it as a guide for cleaning and securing the property. Remember: you should have tenants sign nine-month leases so you will not have to deal with returning deposits early or tenants moving.