

KEEPING INDUSTRY RUNNING – BULLETIN 6 - CONTINGENCY PLANNING

If heating, cooling (Process/HVAC) or hot water (DHW) to your facilities are disrupted, have you got a back-up plan?

What would be the operational, logistical, financial, or legal impact, if you weren't prepared?

Having a process, HVAC and DHW contingency plan in place will ensure you can carry on business as normal, whether you're a manufacturer producing hundreds of thousands of products an hour – reliant on process cooling plant or a hospital providing much needed care – HVAC or process temperature control equipment is critical to your operation, occupants, customers, reputation or profits.

We have a compiled a series of 10 tips to prepare for the worst and get a plan in place to minimise downtime.

1. ESTIMATE THE TRUE COSTS OF UNPLANNED DOWNTIME – DON'T JUST REVIEW THE COST OF REPAIRING EQUIPMENT.

If your equipment is un-repairable or a part is not available immediately, you could run into days, weeks or even months of downtime. The severity of the cost will depend on your day-to-day business, so you need to understand this.

2. RESEARCH LIKELY CAUSES OF DISRUPTION TO YOUR PROCESS TEMPERATURE CONTROL & HVAC SYSTEMS

Identifying potential causes to process chiller and HVAC system failure such as extreme weather, power outage, vandalism, accidental damage or equipment failure and ranking them on probability will help you to further understand the level of risk to your business and provide you with scenarios to be prepared for..

3. UNDERTAKE A CRITICAL EQUIPMENT AUDIT AND CREATE AN ASSET LIST

Understanding which equipment on site is business critical as well as the areas of your facility where process cooling, HVAC or DHW cannot be compromised will ensure you have a focus when power or equipment fails you.

You'll also need to address any current performance problems with your equipment and create an asset list so you have a reference point that your team can access when they need to fix or find a replacement. The list should include all manufacturers' details and product serial numbers. You can enlist the help of equipment and service specialists like ICS Cool Energy who are experts in this type of audit.

4. SURVEY YOUR SITE TO UNDERSTAND ANY LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Your facilities may be in a listed building or have very limited access or restrictions, it's important that your equipment partners and maintenance team are aware of any logistical issues which may complicate or delay any maintenance work or equipment deliveries.

5. CREATE A PLAN FOR STAND-BY OR EMERGENCY HIRE EQUIPMENT

Now you know which equipment you can't afford to be without when disruption hits, you need to know how you will go about avoiding downtime. You can do this in a couple of ways, which may depend on how much time you can or can't afford to lose when disaster strikes.

Firstly, you can purchase stand-by equipment, and have it sat on site, ready to be used immediately. This would mean that you would need to ensure it is well maintained, compliant and checked regularly.

Secondly, you can work with your specialist equipment provider to hire the exact equipment you need at a moment's notice. A good temperature control equipment provider will have undertaken a survey of your site, keep an inventory of the critical equipment you need, ensure they keep stock of that equipment, deliver, install and commission it for you within agreed timescales.

Thirdly, you could keep hired equipment on your site and have your system adapted so it is ready to accept stand-by equipment at the drop of a hat – ensuring you have no downtime whatsoever.

Hiring as opposed to purchasing the equipment would save you from any additional maintenance on top of your primary equipment.

FLEX is our Fixed Long-Term Exchange program for bespoke temperature control equipment without the need for capital investment. Benefit from the latest most efficient chiller technology and low GWP refrigerants with the peace of mind that all planned maintenance and emergency breakdown repairs are included for a known subscription cost.

Flex your temperature control capacity and upgrade to new equipment for efficiency gains and carbon footprint savings.

6. PREPARE YOUR SITE –MAKE IT “READY FOR HIRE”

Preparing connection, valves, pipework, points for power, water and ducts in advance, determining whether the current electrical provisions are adequate for any additional or new equipment such as a chiller or boiler and arranging for any site access permits will save you vital hours or days and ensure a speedy response when disaster strikes.

7. ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES AND AN ACTION PLAN

Ensure your team understand who is responsible for rolling out all aspects of your contingency plan and they have named contacts and details available of all suppliers involved in any breakdown or equipment replacement emergencies.

8. REVIEW YOUR CONTINGENCY PLAN REGULARLY

As your site or business changes, your contingency plan needs to be considered too. You can also conduct timed drills to identify areas for improvement and check that every party involved can fulfil their part to your brief. This may help improve your partnerships and identify any training gaps within your team.

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9. FOLLOW A REGULAR CHILLER MAINTENANCE PLAN

As soon as you install and commission equipment on your site, you should be following a preventative maintenance plan which as well as covering the maintenance of your equipment, should also include system water analysis and any necessary treatment. With often hard water running through process & HVAC equipment, it's essential that the whole system is well maintained, not just the equipment itself.

10. KEEP AN INVENTORY OF ALL PARTS NEEDED FOR YOUR EQUIPMENT

If you carry out your own process chiller & HVAC maintenance, you need to know where you can get spares from and the typical turnaround. If the parts are critical, it is worth keeping spares on site, so you can replace immediately.

ICS Cool Energy stock a vast selection of temperature control spare parts at both Southampton and Bradford depots, as well as on all our 60+ Service Engineers' vans.

CASE STUDY – BMI PRIVATE HEALTHCARE CONTINGENCY PLAN

CHALLENGE

A calorifier which was providing essential hygienic hot water at a leading private hospital failed. The hospital's on-site engineering team were unable to rectify the problem quickly, leaving wards with no domestic hot water situation that if not rectified would require the site being closed.

SOLUTION

Fortunately, prior to this breakdown, the private hospital group had asked ICS Cool Energy to prepare a contingency plan to cover all their temperature control equipment, not just their DHW systems.

From air-conditioning systems to keep wards at the right temperatures to MRI scanner cooling equipment and everything in between, ICS Cool Energy had visited each hospital within the group to survey and assess all of the sites and their equipment. The comprehensive planning process included reviewing access routes to ensure that equipment could be delivered to site and installed quickly and easily.

In this instance, the contingency plan with the correct equipment on stand-by, enabled the ICS Cool Energy hire team to act fast and resolve the potentially critical situation – restoring the hot water to the facility within hours.

The speed of response was triggered by a call to the ICS Cool Energy helpdesk at midday. The vital boiler and ancillary equipment were delivered to site by late afternoon and the technical teams set to work to install and commission the unit. A crisis was averted with minimum disruption to the hospital facilities.

RESULT

ICS Cool Energy's hire, sales and service teams operate as the private hospital group's preferred partner for all temperature control solutions to maintain, provide new or back-up equipment when needed.

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Healthcare is a demanding environment and reliable temperature control is life-critical. There are no compromises when it comes to hygienic heating and cooling and that's why we choose to work with ICS Cool Energy. They really know their stuff, whether its emergency response, new equipment planning and installations or essential servicing.

We rely on them across our estate and there's no other supplier that can meet the full breadth and depth of our needs.

This latest emergency response is another example of superb service and a supplier that really does go the extra mile. The service we get from ICS Cool Energy is unbeatable and this is a prime example of the lightning speed of response that's unmatched in the industry and helps make our business work.

- Steve Buchan, group Chief Engineer, BMI Healthcare

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Call us now on 0800 840 4210 to arrange a site survey and get a temperature control plan in place with the market leaders for industrial heating and cooling.