# Opening up after a shutdown

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Before you jump back into it, it pays to do some quick checks

Seasonal breaks, refurbishments, new machinery or equipment, and even things like COVID-19 can all mean your workplace needs to close down for a period of time. But that doesn't mean the risks take a break! This check sheet guides you through a simple process to get you up and running again safely, so you can hit the ground running and get back to business.

First step? Check the building
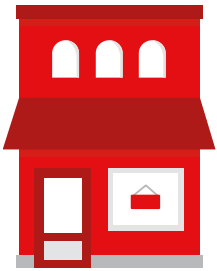
A walk around and a thorough check can help get any problems sorted before things get busy again.

- Take a walk around the outside of the building to check for any obvious issues and to make sure everything's in its place. Pay attention to things like new damage or deterioration, evidence of any break-ins or tampering, or malicious damage or tagging. Make plans to fix any issues right away.

- Carry out any outstanding Owners Inspections that you're responsible for under the Building Warrant of Fitness

- Examine the gutters and drains to make sure they're free from vegetation, rubbish, or anything else that could block them.

Next, check inside

Now that the outside of the building is good to go, the inside needs a thorough inspection too.

- Walk through the entire interior space looking for any issues or problems.

- Pay close attention to any evidence of water leaks from pipes, taps, or appliances. Check for staining of walls, ceilings, water damage to carpets, swollen floors – especially in kitchens, around showers, or in toilet areas.

- Look for damage to electrical cables, plugs, power boards and switchboards and get an electrician onto any damage right away. Pest control may not have been active, so check for rodent damage to cables, etc.

Power up your utilities

Machinery and office appliances may have been left on, so before you power up it's time to get down to the business of checking.

- Some businesses may have switched off their electricity, water and gas supplies – so make sure all appliances are switched off, and that all taps are closed before turning these services back on.

- If you need to, bring in the relevant contractor to reopen specific services for you – for example now is a good time for professional inspection/testing to ensure that water and gas services are sound and not leaking and that the electrical supply is safe.

- Repairs should be made as soon as possible.

Spark up your fire and safety systems

Now that your building is up and running again, make fire protection a priority.

- Check that any critical safety equipment is working – for example emergency lighting, illuminated exit signage, sprinkler and fire alarm systems, and smoke ventilations systems.

- If your maintenance contracts for fire systems have been placed on hold, remember to reinstate them, and arrange any scheduled inspections, testing and maintenance.

- Take a close look at any fire extinguishers with pressure gauges on them to check they're still pressurised, and the gauge is in the green zone. If in doubt, get specialist help.

- Make sure that all fire exits are clear of obstructions, all exit doors open freely, and exit signage is clearly visible.

- Check that Fire Service Inlet couplings on the outside of the building have not been stolen or damaged during the shutdown if the building has a sprinkler or hydrant system.

Are all security systems GO?
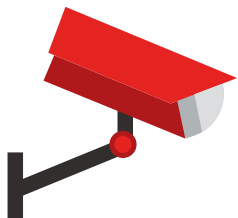
From swipe cards and security checks to CCTV, it's time to switch on to carry on.

- Check that all exterior security lighting is still working and that any external CCTV cameras are operational, clear, and have good line of sight.

- Check all electronic security such as intruder alarms, access control and physical protection such a fences, gates and external lighting are working and in good condition. Make any repairs as soon as you can.

- Update intruder alarm codes if you need to.

- Return any valuable documents, plant, stock, or vehicles that may have been relocated during the shut-down – but only after all security systems and physical protection are operational again. Reinstate security patrols to pre-shut-down routines.

- Bring back access control to the site if this was suspended during the shutdown. It's worth re-coding any swipes and passes if possible. Remember to update your access control systems to reflect any staff changes or departures.

Housekeeping

By having a thorough housekeeping routine, you can reduce all kinds of risk and avoid any issues becoming unmanageable over time.

- Cut back or remove any overgrown vegetation that may be obstructing camera or lighting coverage. This also gets rid of hiding opportunities for trespassers.

- Remove any waste/rubbish that might have built up around the building, for example in doorways, or blocking fire exits.

- Collect any mail, flyers etc. from letter boxes, doorways, etc.

- If waste/recycle skips have not been emptied for a while, ensure they are positioned away from the building and arrange for them to be emptied as soon as possible. Ideally waste/recycle skips should always be placed away from the building.

Deep cleaning

- Deep cleaning is necessary if the shut-down was related to viral or other contamination.

- Clean and sanitise all high-touch areas like door handles, counter tops, and phones, etc.

- Follow all legal hygiene requirements to maintain licensing or food gradings.

- Pay particular attention to kitchens. Equipment like fridges, cool rooms and extract ducting are especially prone. Food Businesses should check the MPI website for re-opening guidelines in cases of COVID-19.

Computers

- Reinstate any IT service contracts if these were stopped during the shut-down.

- Make sure that any software updates are downloaded, and virus protection is armed.

- Check that automatic data backups have taken place, and back up manually if not.

Restocking
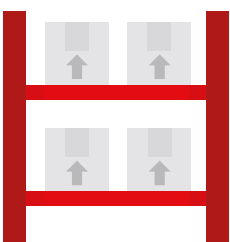
- Before restocking fridges, chillers and freezers check that they are working properly. Check expiry/best before dates for any food stuffs left on site and dispose of safely.

- New supplies and stock should be packed neatly and placed ready to go.

- Make sure you have plenty of COVID-19 necessities such as gloves, facemasks, other relevant PPE, and hand sanitiser – as well as the regular consumables needed for health and safety.

Hazardous substances

- Check all hazardous goods storage and supply systems to ensure they are safe to use.

- Check valve assemblies, supply lines and end appliances and have these serviced if necessary.

- Dispose of stale fuels and other consumable flammable liquids safely and appropriately.

- For manifold gas systems, check that the gas cylinders are secured, the valve assembly, regulators and supply lines are in good condition and operable. Undertake any testing required and check for leaks before using these systems.

You're back in business!

Don't forget to get in touch with stakeholders to let them know that you're back in business – this includes customers, suppliers, service contractors and your insurance broker or insurer.

Visit **vero.co.nz/risk-profiler** to check out our industry specific risk guides for more tips and in-depth information about managing risk.

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