

### **Make Your Facilities Ready for the Return to School**

With back-to-school time quickly approaching, now is the perfect time for school districts to consider how to prepare their facilities for the upcoming school year. A sound facilities maintenance program helps to ensure school facilities are and will be cared for appropriately. Overlooked or ignored facilities maintenance planning can result in real problems. It can bring forth large capital expenses, downtime, and disruption in the classroom. Failure to maintain school facilities adequately also discourages future investment from communities and supporters of school districts.

The top priority at any school is keeping students and staff safe and comfortable and working together, and procurement and facilities management teams have a huge impact. With a clear plan in place for inspecting, servicing, and maintaining facilities, schools are kept safe, healthy, and comfortable for the new year and beyond. Here are a few of the most important tasks to complete before school is back in session.

### **Check Safety Equipment**

Safety equipment, labeling and documentation must be maintained along with fire department and manufacturer testing.

- **Test fire alarm systems.** Test and calibrate flame and smoke sensors, replace batteries or bulbs if applicable.
- **Inspect fire extinguishers.** Fire extinguishers also require annual inspections by qualified personnel. Make sure all extinguishers are clearly labeled, up-to-date and functioning properly.
- **Check emergency systems.** Ensure all backup lights and generators are in top shape, and that evacuation plans are prominently posted in every room.
- **Confirm chemicals are safe.** Cleaning solutions, landscaping supplies or any other chemicals on school grounds require proper, safe storage. Make sure every chemical is labeled and stored properly, in the right place and ensure accompanying Safety Data Sheets are in place.

### **Inspect HVAC Systems**

HVAC systems are one of the most important assets in a school facility and should be treated with care. Consider maintenance products like Drummond™ Outlast Heavy-Duty Rubberized Coating that prevent air conditioner condenser pan and cooling tower rust and corrosion. Don't forget to schedule annual manufacturer inspections.

- **Boiler.** Conduct visual inspections for leaks, rust, corrosion, water pressure inaccuracies and alarm system functionality.
- **Exhaust fans and vents.** Conduct visual inspections for loose belts, nuts, bolts, and bearings, and listen for any abnormal sounds. Clean shafts to make sure air is flowing properly.

- **Air conditioners.** Conduct visual inspections for damage and debris near vents or condenser fans. Clean or replace filters, coils or fins.

#### **Review the Ins & Outs of All Buildings**

- **Windows and doors.** Ensure all windows and doors open and close as they should, and that grout and seals are intact. Repair any cracked panes, sticky locks, or broken latches.
- **Sinks, showers, and toilets.** Check for leaks and proper drainage, test water pressure, and ensure assets are tightened, caulked, sealed, and properly tiled.
- **Exhaust hoods, stoves, and grills.** Ensure all are clean, free of grease and dust using low-fume, high-cling formula products such as Drummond™ Burn-Out Oven and Grill Cleaner to efficiently remove burned-on carbon, grease, food, and oily residue. Have exhaust hoods inspected at regular intervals, typically six months.
- **Gutters and downspouts.** Keep drains working properly by inspecting gutters and downspouts for leaks or clogs, and clean everything. If water is pooling next to school buildings, consider a re-engineering of outdoor drainage to prevent larger issues over time.

#### **Look Outside**

Walk the property and review the grounds for anything that might cause slips, trips or falls.

- Trim any trees or shrubs that encroach on walkways or parking areas.
- Repair any bare patches in lawns, re-mulch beds and plan for any event-related plantings.
- Adjust irrigation and sprinkler systems for maximum efficiency.
- Ensure you are ready for rain, snow and ice with matting and ice melters.

#### **Clean & Disinfect**

A thorough cleaning and disinfecting strategy continues to be important. In addition to doing a deep clean before students and staff return, disinfecting high-touch surfaces and spaces on a regular schedule is needed.

- Choose appropriate cleaning and disinfecting products such as Drummond™ Lifeguard Disinfectant Detergent Cleaner and Deodorant to control the spread of harmful germs and bacteria while removing dirt and soil from most washable hard surfaces including floors, walls, countertops, porcelain, and hard plastics.
- Conduct deep cleaning and disinfection of all facilities and surfaces.
- Audit cleaning and disinfection schedules.



Procurement and facilities management teams have a lot to do to be ready for the return of students and staff. Lawson Products, a distributor of maintenance and repair products in North America, helps school systems across North America have the right products for every job. The Company offers cooperative contracting solutions through AEPA state agencies. Lawson's inventory management solution:

- Eliminates time spent taking inventory and re-ordering small parts
- Minimizes time spent looking for products
- Reduces unplanned trips to off-site stores looking for parts
- Includes product application advice and on-site training
- Lessens project downtime by having the right parts stocked and ready for use

To learn more about Lawson Products solutions and vendor managed inventory go to [Lawsonproducts.com](https://www.lawsonproducts.com) or contact Deanie Sweeney, Manager, Government Programs, Lawson Products, at [Deanie.Sweeney@lawsonproducts.com](mailto:Deanie.Sweeney@lawsonproducts.com)