

Boiler Maintenance: A Necessary Cost-Saver

When was the last time you serviced your church's boiler? Feeling grateful that no major repairs have been needed recently and crossing fingers that the streak continues is neither a safe nor a long-term or money-conscious strategy.

According to representatives from Travelers BoilerRe, the provider of reinsurance to Church Insurance Companies for equipment breakdown, "Not maintaining boilers may result in increased frequency of breakdown." That means you spending more money in the long run.

Spend a little now, save a lot later

"Regular annual boiler service for the sizes of boilers typically found in churches costs approximately \$500," according to BoilerRe representatives. Simple repairs could cost \$2,000, if you're lucky.

"Major repairs can run up to \$35,000 and boiler replacement can be up to \$50,000."

"Outages can also lead to lost revenue, compounding the financial impact of a breakdown. Having regular annual boiler service performed and taking care of minor repairs before they lead to more severe losses can help to save money in the long run."

Signs that your boiler may be headed for a breakdown

According to BoilerRe representatives, "Leaks, corrosion, abnormal sounds or smells, and lack of heat are all signs of boiler problems. If you notice any of these issues, you should call in a qualified boiler service company to troubleshoot."

The technician may discover that the boiler poses a significant safety risk, such as a carbon monoxide leak or even risk of steam explosion, and should immediately, "be shut off with the emergency shut-off switch." But be aware that shutting off the heat during colder months could lead to "freeze damage." This will only compound the problems you may experience with a boiler breakdown. Develop a contingency plan to help avoid freeze damage in the event of a loss of heat. This could be as simple as acquiring temporary space heaters. Running space heaters may keep interior temperatures warm enough to forestall frozen pipes.

When should your boiler be inspected and maintained?

Low pressure boilers require periodic inspections and maintenance activities, according to BoilerRe representatives. The following tests should be performed weekly by qualified personnel:

- Test low water fuel cutoff and make up feed
- Inspect for leaks and clean area around boiler

These are among the tasks that should be performed annually by a qualified technician:

- Testing boiler operation

- Cleaning the boiler and burner
- Verifying operation of all safety devices and controls

Learn more about heating and boiler maintenance.

In many areas, to maintain current operating certificates, church boilers require periodic, jurisdictionally mandated safety inspections. BoilerRe's Risk Control Consultants are qualified to provide boiler inspection services and will call to schedule boiler inspections when they are due. These Risk Control Consultants will help to identify boiler deficiencies and may make recommendations to help you keep your facilities safe from such hazards as fuel fires you're your people safe from injuries such as burns from hot equipment.

Boiler inspections and regular preventative maintenance not only keeps the heat on, but it prevents a drain on church resources. Taking care of your equipment will contain long-term costs and, most important of all, it will help everyone stay safe.