

Businesses urged to winter-proof operations during unpredictable UK weather

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With winter weather in the UK switching from sunshine to snowstorms in a matter of days, businesses are being reminded to prepare for extreme conditions to safeguard their people, assets, and operations.

In a new [Winter Weather Guide for Businesses](#), GTSE, a leading supplier of industrial and safety products, shares practical steps to help UK businesses reduce risks, minimise financial impact, and avoid operational disruptions caused by harsh winter conditions.

The Financial and Safety Risks of Unpreparedness

Severe weather can inflict serious damage on buildings, equipment, and goods, both on-site and in transit. From storm-related structural failures to icy car parks that jeopardise employee safety, the cost of doing nothing can be significant. Additionally, unexpected closures due to poor weather can damage a company's reputation and lead to lost productivity.

Commenting on this risk and why it needs to be taken seriously, Tom Armenante, director at [GTSE](#) said: "Preparation is key for protecting your business premises during a storm but, it's not just about the physical space and equipment. Businesses and their teams have a duty to look after their people, whether that's staff, customers or other stakeholders, with human life being the number one priority.

"Simple steps like inspecting roofs, gritting pathways, and securing outdoor signage can save businesses thousands in repair costs, prevent workplace accidents and allow for business continuity. As we see more unpredictable weather globally due to climate change, the UK is likely to see greater extremes too.

According to the Met Office, the UK saw temperatures in the Scottish highlands reach -18.9° , making it the coldest night in January for 15 years.”

15 ways to prepare your business against Winter weather extremes

The comprehensive guide outlines a wide range proactive measures businesses can take to reduce winter weather risks, with some of the most effective being listed below.

1. Monitor weather forecasts – Staying informed about local and national conditions provides valuable time to prepare for storms.
2. Prioritise safety – Don’t hesitate to close if severe weather threatens lives. Productivity isn’t worth risking human safety.
3. Provide resources – Ensure that your teams have protective clothing, warm clothing for outdoor work, and supplies like rock salt and wet floor signage as needed.
4. Service equipment regularly – Preventive maintenance is cheaper than repairs. Check building systems, vehicles, and critical equipment regularly and not just in response to a poor weather forecast.
5. Prepare for power outages – It is often sensible to turn off water, gas, and electricity where feasible. Backup generators may be necessary for some businesses to ensure continuity and safety, so weigh up the pros and cons of doing this.
6. Plan for service delays – Anticipate disruptions to waste collection, deliveries, and logistics, and establish contingency plans to reduce risk whilst keeping things moving as much as possible.
7. Consider offsite risks – It isn’t just your premises that are at risk. Poor driving conditions can endanger your team’s commute and any workers who are offsite for business purposes. Evaluate the weather and conditions, allowing flexible or remote working where possible.
8. Conduct training and risk assessments – Empower all employees to report hazards, like leaks or icy parking lots. Having a clear process for this which is easy to follow, will encourage engagement, making safety a team issue.
9. Review insurance policies – Comprehensive insurance coverage is a must for any business. Ensure you have the appropriate coverage for buildings, contents, and stock to provide a financial safety net. Should you need to claim, photograph any damage to be used as evidence if required by your coverage provider.

In addition, during periods of heavy rainfall weather is expected businesses should...

10. Inspect building exteriors – Cracked roof tiles, damaged brickwork, and loose pointing all allow water to penetrate a building. Checking and fixing these vulnerabilities will help to prevent leaks and a build up of mould.
11. Seal windows and doors – Refresh the sealant around these fittings to keep water out. Remember to keep windows and doors closed during any storms too, forgetting to close a window fully could be a costly mistake.
12. Clean gutters and drains – Blockages in gutters and drains can cause overflows that lead to water damage. Clear any debris regularly and look for signs of potential problems. For more complex issues, you might want to hire in the professionals to guide you on the best solution.
13. Use sandbags and water pumps – Protect flood-prone areas with sandbags and pumps, diverting excess water away from your property and valuable equipment. You could also consider the

building's structure itself, installing things like airbricks.

14. Relocate valuables – Move any critical equipment and documents to higher ground where possible. If you can't move everything, you could consider elevating items on bricks or tables.
15. Prevent slips – Keeping walkways mopped and dried where possible, adding mats with additional grip and placing wet floor signs out can all help reduce the risk of slips and falls.

By adopting these practical measures, businesses can avoid winter weather risks, protecting their employees and assets, and maintain smooth operations throughout the season. For a full winter preparation checklist, visit GTSE's comprehensive [guide](#).