6 ways to protect commercial property during a temporary closure.

If you are a commercial property owner and you've had to temporarily close the doors, reviewing ways to make it easier to reopen can save time and money. Here are six ways to build up your security and safety protocols and guard against loss.

Safety tips to protect commercial property during a temporary closure:

1. **Secure the property.** Lock and secure all entry points. Place interior and exterior lights on timers. Consider adding motion-sensing lighting and cameras at all entrances. Maintain landscaping and keep shrubs close to the ground to mitigate hiding places and the appearance of vacancy. Use lights, cameras and action to help protect your property today so it's easier to open in the future.

2. **Check the plumbing.** Before vacating the building, remember to turn off the water supply line to sinks, toilets and faucets. Drain pipes of all water by opening the faucets and flushing the toilets to clear remaining water. If you decide to keep your water supply on, adjust the thermostat accordingly and consider installing water leak detectors to avoid water damage.

3. **Adjust the thermostat.** The Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) recommends setting the thermostat to a minimum of 55°F and insulating pipes to prevent freezing in colder climates. In warmer climates, IBHS recommends air conditioning to keep the temperature under 85°F to protect against humidity and mold growth.

4. **Notify local police and fire departments.** It's a good idea to communicate to these departments that your building is temporarily closed. If you have a security system provider or alarm company, alert them too. This may make it easier for them to address security concerns, conduct visual

exterior inspections or notice evidence of vandalism.

5. **Update your online business profiles.** Change your hours of operation on your Google, Bing, Yelp, Facebook or LinkedIn pages to reflect your reduced business hours or temporary closure.

6. **Update your phone voicemail.** Set a new voicemail that notifies customers of the temporary closure and any details you have about reopening. Up-to-date and transparent messages are helpful and valued.

Protecting your commercial property during regular operations and when the building is vacant are equally important. The risks shift, but they're still a part of the business. Safeguard your investment with proactive measures and talk to an agent about customizing a commercial insurance package to fit your needs.