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## **Amity Insurance stresses the importance of protecting vacant buildings**

QUINCY, MA ISSUED MAY 20, 2010.... The slowdown in the economy and resulting business closings has created a rise in vacant buildings. Unoccupied buildings are susceptible to a myriad of problems, but steps can be taken for protection, according to Amity Insurance Agency, Inc., the region's leading full service agency.

Vacant buildings receiving little or no attention, maintenance or security can be a target for vandals, thieves and/or a convenient hang-out for young people. They can also attract homeless individuals seeking shelter or become centers for criminal activity such as drug dealing.

Owners of vacant properties can take the following steps to prevent or minimize these problems.

- Visit the property at least once a week or maintain a property management company to do a weekly check
- Clear the exterior of the building of all debris, including scrap wood, cardboard, paper and brush
- Remove toxic substances that could permeate and contaminate the property and surrounding area
- Maintain sidewalks and parking areas in good condition; in winter months clear them of ice and snow
- Hire security guards to watch the building overnight
- Maintain overnight exterior lighting and electricity to emergency lighting and exit signs
- Shut off utilities except where necessary for desired lighting and alarm systems
- Maintain the heat or drain the plumbing system to prevent pipes from bursting; maintain at least a minimum temperature in areas protected by automatic sprinkler systems
- Maintain fire detection systems and link them to a central station monitoring service

Be aware that buildings that are more than 69% vacant for more than 60 days lose some important insurance coverage; in fact, the standard commercial property insurance policy reduces loss payments by 15% for most causes of loss and does not cover others at all, including vandalism, water damage, glass breakage and theft. For an additional premium, the building owners may be able to purchase vacancy permit coverage which reinstates some or all of this coverage for a specific period of time. An alternative – vacancy changes coverage – can reduce the minimum occupancy that the building must have before the insurance company will consider it vacant from the standard 31%. A professional insurance agent can identify companies that are willing to provide these coverages.

With the proper precautions and coverage in place, owners of vacant buildings can maintain the property's value and keep it secure until new tenants occupy it.

### ***About Amity Insurance***

Amity Insurance Agency, Inc. is a full-service agency dedicated to meeting your business, professional and personal insurance needs. Amity Insurance is licensed in most states. The agency maintains headquarters at 500 Victory Road, North Quincy 02171. For information on products or services, please visit [www.amityinsurance.com](http://www.amityinsurance.com) or call (800) 940-4010 to schedule a free analysis of insurance needs.