

Freezing temperatures can damage dental equipment, plumbing, and gas systems if not properly protected. Use this checklist to prevent downtime, safety risks, and costly repairs.

Winter Operations & Freeze Prevention

- **Compressor:** Keep in a heated space and maintain temperatures above 65°F at all times. Inspect intake and condensate drain lines for cold exposure; frozen drain lines are a common failure point.
- **Vacuum Systems (Dry/Wet):** Must remain in heated mechanical rooms. Inspect drain lines, exhaust piping, separators, and connected plumbing. Reduced suction, unusual noise, or alarms may indicate freezing—stop use and contact service.
- **Sterilizers:** Highly susceptible to freeze damage due to internal water reservoirs and drain lines. Keep sterilizers and surrounding plumbing protected; during extreme cold, drain at end of day per manufacturer guidance when allowed. Do not operate if freezing is suspected.
- **X-Ray Equipment:** Electronics are sensitive to cold. Freezing can impact calibration—do not operate until temperatures normalize and the system has been checked.
- **Lab Room:** Ensure heat reaches the lab at all times. Protect sinks, model trimmers, and water-fed equipment from freezing. For extended closures, consider shutting off and draining lab water lines where possible.
- **Operatories:** All operatories must remain heated, including rooms not used daily. Dental units, handpieces, cuspidors, waterlines, and self-contained water systems are vulnerable—watch for reduced flow or pressure. Follow manufacturer guidance for draining/winterizing during extended closures.
- **Nitrous Oxide Systems:** Tanks, manifolds, and piping must remain in temperature-controlled areas; manifold rooms and gas closets should never freeze. If pressure drops, alarms occur, or leaks are suspected, do not use and contact service immediately.
- **Main Water Lines:** Know and clearly label the main shutoff. Insulate exposed lines near exterior walls or mechanical spaces. During extreme cold or extended closures, shutting off the main water supply is strongly recommended.
- **Dentsply Sirona CEREC Unit:** Keep within manufacturer temperature ranges. After freezing conditions or power loss, allow the environment to stabilize before powering on; do not operate if condensation or damage is suspected.

Service & Support

Henry Schein Service Support: 1-800-645-6594 (Mon–Fri, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET)

Technical Advisors: 1-800-280-8990 (Option 1) (Mon–Fri, 7:00 AM – 9:00 PM ET)

Email: technicaladvisors@hs.com

For plumbing issues, contact a local licensed plumber immediately.

Closing Time Procedures (During Freezing Conditions)

- Confirm thermostat is set no lower than 65°F and that heat reaches operatories, mechanical rooms, lab areas, compressor/vacuum areas, sterilizer locations, nitrous manifold rooms, and water heater locations.
- Turn off the operatory water solenoid (at dental unit or central solenoid location, as applicable).
- Remove and empty the water bottle on chairs with self-contained water systems; store bottles in a heated area.
- Relieve pressure by briefly activating handpieces/waterlines after the solenoid is shut off.
- If extreme cold is expected or the office will be closed, consider shutting off the main water supply.
- Drain sterilizers per manufacturer guidance when allowed.
- Check for leaks, alarms, reduced water flow, or unusual noises; seal exterior doors/windows to prevent cold air intrusion.

Morning Opening Procedures (Reverse of Closing Steps)

- Before seating patients, walk the office and visually inspect for leaks, signs of freezing, or equipment alarms.
- Reinstall water bottles and ensure they are properly seated and filled (if applicable).
- Slowly turn the main water supply back on if it was shut off.
- Restore the operatory water solenoid and allow water pressure to stabilize.
- Flush waterlines and handpieces as recommended; check for leaks at dental units, sterilizers, and plumbing connections.
- Verify proper operation of compressors, vacuum systems, dental units, sterilizers, and nitrous systems before patient care.
- If low pressure, alarms, or abnormal operation are observed, do not use the affected system and contact service.

Important

If freezing is suspected or damage is visible, do not operate affected equipment. Prompt action can prevent further damage and extended down-time. For plumbing-related issues such as frozen pipes, leaks, or loss of water pressure, contact your local licensed plumber immediately in addition to notifying service.