Sustainability & Loss Prevention

Protecting today. Building resilience for tomorrow.

At Portage Mutual, sustainability means helping build safer, more resilient communities by reducing risk, preventing losses, and adapting to a changing climate. As a mutual insurer, we're committed to protecting what matters most to our policyholders while managing environmental, social, and economic risks that could affect future generations.

Our sustainability actions focus on six key pillars:

- Climate resilience and adaptation
- Proactive loss prevention
- Policyholder education and preparedness
- Community resilience
- Responsible business operations
- Governance, risk management, and transparency

1. Climate Resilience and Adaptation

We assess emerging climate-related risks by integrating climate considerations into our enterprise risk management framework. Through the analysis of claims, underwriting, and catastrophe data, as well as climate risk assessments and scenario analysis, we monitor evolving weather patterns, regulatory developments, and market changes to help strengthen our overall resilience and support long-term protection for our policyholders and communities.

2. Proactive Loss Prevention

In a changing climate, expecting the unexpected has become integral to help us protect what matters. From severe storms and flooding to wildfires and extreme temperatures, building resilience today can help reduce losses and quicken recovery.

Here are some things you can do to improve your property resilience:

Water & Flood Resilience

- Install sump pumps with battery backup.
- Add backwater valves to prevent sewer backup.
- Improve lot grading to direct water away from buildings.
- Extend downspouts away from foundations.
- Install flood-resistant building materials in vulnerable areas.
- Review age and condition of water heaters for life expectancy.
- Know the location of your main water shut off valve.
- Install electronic water escape detection systems.

Wind & Hail Resilience

- Upgrade to impact-resistant roofing materials.
- Use enhanced roof-to-wall connections.
- Install hurricane clips or roof bracing where appropriate.
- Upgrade siding and windows to withstand wind and hail damage.
- Secure outdoor equipment, sheds, and outbuildings.

Wildfire Resilience

- Create a defensible space around structures.
- Remove combustible vegetation near buildings.
- Use fire-resistant roofing and siding materials.
- Install ember-resistant vents.
- Maintain trees and landscaping to reduce fire spread.

Winter Weather Resilience

- Improve insulation and air sealing.
- Inspect and clean fireplaces and other auxiliary heat sources.
- Install freeze protection for plumbing.
- Use smart temperature monitoring systems.
- Ensure adequate roof ventilation to prevent ice dams.
- Maintain backup power sources for critical systems.

General Property Resilience

- Upgrade aging electrical systems to reduce fire risk.
- Homes built before the 1960s may contain electrical systems that no longer meet modern standards
  - Knob-and-tube wiring (typically installed from the late 1800s through the 1940s) is generally considered outdated due to the lack of grounding and aging insulation.
  - Aluminum wiring (commonly installed in the 1960s and 1970s) is also viewed as a higher-risk system because connections can loosen over time.
- Install monitored smoke and water leak detection systems.
- Use smart sensors to identify emerging issues.
  - Provides real-time alerts so property owners can respond quickly, even when away from home or their business.
- Maintain regular building inspections and preventative maintenance.
  - Set reminders in your smart phones or devices
- Increase energy efficiency through lighting, HVAC, and building envelope improvements.

Automobile Loss Prevention and Resilience

1. Drive Smarter, Drive Safer

    - Avoid distracted driving.
    - Maintain safe following distances.
    - Adjust driving to weather and road conditions.
    - Use winter tires during winter months.
    - Never drive impaired

2. Maintain Your Vehicle

    - Follow recommended maintenance schedules.
    - Inspect tires, brakes, lights, and wipers regularly.
    - Keep tire pressures properly inflated.

3. Protect Against Theft

    - Lock vehicles and remove valuables.
    - Use anti-theft devices and vehicle tracking technology.
    - Park in well-lit areas.

4. Use Vehicle Safety Technology

    - Automatic emergency braking.
    - Lane departure warning.
    - Blind spot monitoring.
    - Adaptive cruise control.

5. Prepare for Severe Weather

    - Monitor weather forecasts before travelling.
    - Carry an emergency kit.
    - Park in covered areas during hail events when possible.

6. Recover Responsibly After a Loss

    - Where safe and practical, repair damaged vehicle components rather than replacing them.
    - Use certified repair facilities that follow manufacturer and safety standards.
    - Select high-quality parts designed for longevity and safety.
    - Consider recycled or re-manufactured parts when appropriate and approved for the repair.
    - When purchasing a new vehicle, evaluate safety features that can help prevent future losses.

7. Consider Lower-Emission Vehicles

    - Reduces the environmental impact of transportation by using less fossil fuel.
    - Utilize hands free GPS technology for optimizing fuel or energy efficient routes.
    - Reduced idling.

3. Policyholder Education and Preparedness

Accessible information is a key part of building resilience. We support our policyholders by sharing seasonal checklists, practical loss prevention guidance, emergency preparedness resources, and educational information.

Emergency Preparedness and Recovery

Being prepared before a loss occurs can make recovery faster, safer, and less costly. We encourage homeowners, farmers, and businesses to:

- Build an emergency kit with essential supplies, medications, important contacts, and backup power sources.
- Maintain a home or business inventory by documenting property, equipment, and valuables with photos, videos, and receipts.
- Store important records securely, including insurance policies, identification, financial documents, and digital backups.
- Develop a recovery plan that outlines evacuation procedures, emergency contacts, temporary accommodations, and steps for resuming normal operations after a loss.
- Review and update plans annually, particularly as family, property, or business circumstances change.

Seasonal Loss-Prevention Checklist

Small, timely actions can prevent avoidable losses, and help homes, businesses, and farms recover more quickly when severe weather occurs.

SPRING: Inspect, Repair, and Prepare

HOMEOWNERS

- Inspect the roof, siding, chimney, windows, and foundation for winter damage.
- Clean eaves troughs, downspouts, window wells, and nearby drainage channels.
- Direct downspouts away from the foundation while avoiding drainage onto neighbouring properties.
- Test the sump pump and backup power supply.
- Check plumbing, appliance hoses, and the water heater for leaks or corrosion.
- Service air-conditioning and ventilation systems for efficient operation.
- Trim damaged branches and remove combustible debris from around the home.
- Update the household inventory using photographs, videos, serial numbers, and receipts.
- Review the emergency kit, evacuation plan, insurance coverage, and broker contact information.
- Repair serviceable components before replacing them, where safe and appropriate.

BUSINESSES

- Inspect roofs, exterior walls, drains, loading areas, signage, and parking surfaces.
- Clear roof drains, catch basins, eaves troughs, and exterior drainage routes.
- Test sump pumps, water alarms, emergency lighting, generators, and backup systems.
- Inspect electrical panels, extension cords, machinery, and heating or cooling equipment.
- Confirm inventory and equipment records are current and securely backed up.
- Review business-continuity, emergency-response, and supplier contingency plans.
- Check that hazardous materials, fuels, and waste are properly stored.
- Identify opportunities to repair equipment, reduce water use, and improve energy efficiency.
- Review insurance limits after renovations, equipment purchases, or operational changes.

FARMS

- Inspect barns, silos, bins, sheds, roofs, foundations, and electrical systems.
- Check drainage around buildings, fields, yards, manure-storage areas, and fuel tanks.
- Service tractors, implements, conveyors, grain dryers, pumps, and standby generators.
- Examine fuel lines, hydraulic hoses, wiring, and battery connections for damage.
- Remove accumulated dust, chaff, oil, and combustible material from equipment and buildings.
- Inspect fences, gates, livestock areas, wells, and water systems.
- Confirm seed, chemical, fertilizer, and fuel storage areas are secure and protected from water.
- Update livestock, machinery, building, and input inventories.
- Review fire-response plans, emergency access routes, and alternative power and water arrangements.

SUMMER: Reduce Fire, Storm and Heat Risks

HOMEOWNERS

- Keep grass, vegetation, firewood, and combustible materials away from the home.
- Maintain trees and shrubs without damaging healthy vegetation or destabilizing soil.
- Secure outdoor furniture, barbecues, sheds, play structures, and recreational equipment.
- Inspect decks, stairs, railings, and walkways for deterioration.
- Monitor basements and utility areas with water, temperature, or humidity sensors.
- Use programmable controls and energy-efficient cooling practices.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets or using damaged outdoor cords.
- Follow local watering restrictions and choose drought-tolerant landscaping where suitable.
- Know how to shut off household water, electricity, and natural gas safely.
- Monitor local wildfire, storm, heat, and evacuation information.

BUSINESSES

- Keep exterior storage, waste, pallets, and vegetation away from buildings and ignition sources.
- Inspect cooling systems and maintain safe indoor temperatures for employees, customers, products, and equipment.
- Secure rooftop equipment, signs, outdoor displays, and temporary structures.
- Protect computers, refrigeration, security systems, and production equipment from power interruptions.
- Test water-leak, temperature, smoke, and equipment-condition monitoring systems.
- Maintain clear exits, fire lanes, hydrant access, and emergency assembly areas.
- Review severe-weather shutdown and employee communication procedures.
- Reduce unnecessary lighting, cooling, idling, and equipment use when operations permit.
- Confirm critical suppliers and alternate operating locations remain available.

FARMS

- Remove straw, chaff, dust, and vegetation from around machinery, buildings, and electrical equipment.
- Carry appropriate fire extinguishers on combines, tractors, trucks, and other field equipment.
- Inspect bearings, belts, exhaust systems, and hydraulic components for overheating or leakage.
- Maintain clear access for fire departments and emergency vehicles.
- Separate fuel, chemicals, batteries, and ignition sources using approved storage practices.
- Monitor livestock for heat stress and protect water, ventilation, and cooling systems.
- Secure irrigation equipment and inspect pumps, lines, and controls for leakage.
- Watch weather and field conditions before operating equipment in areas with elevated fire risk.
- Maintain backup power for ventilation, watering, milking, feeding, and critical controls.
- Develop livestock relocation and emergency feeding plans.

FALL: Get Ready for Cold Weather

HOMEOWNERS

- Clean eaves troughs and confirm water continues to drain away from the foundation.
- Inspect the roof and arrange repairs before snow and ice arrive.
- Service the furnace, fireplace, chimney, heat pump, and other heating appliances.
- Test smoke alarms and carbon-monoxide alarms.
- Seal drafts and weatherproof doors and windows where appropriate.
- Disconnect exterior hoses and protect pipes vulnerable to freezing.
- Inspect the attic for moisture, adequate insulation, and ventilation concerns.
- Store seasonal equipment, fuels, and flammable materials safely.
- Prepare snow-removal tools and environmentally responsible ice-control materials.
- Refresh emergency supplies, medications, flashlights, batteries, and backup chargers.

BUSINESSES

- Service boilers, furnaces, rooftop units, generators, and snow-removal equipment.
- Identify pipes, sprinkler systems, loading areas, and vacant spaces vulnerable to freezing.
- Inspect roofs and drainage systems before snow accumulation begins.
- Arrange responsible snow and ice management for entrances, sidewalks, and parking areas.
- Confirm heating alarms and low-temperature monitoring are operational.
- Protect seasonal inventory from freezing, moisture, and water damage.
- Review winter power-failure and building-shutdown procedures.
- Train staff on safe use of portable heaters and winter equipment.
- Confirm contractors understand emergency priorities and site-access requirements.
- Update continuity plans for winter transportation and supply-chain disruptions.

FARMS

- Winterize water lines, pumps, livestock watering systems, and seasonal equipment.
- Service heating, ventilation, grain-drying, and standby power systems.
- Inspect barns and farm buildings for air leakage, moisture, and structural deterioration.
- Prepare snow-removal equipment and maintain access to buildings, fuel, and livestock.
- Clean grain dryers, motors, electrical rooms, and mechanical spaces.
- Check stored hay for moisture and heating concerns.
- Protect pesticides, veterinary products, seed, and other temperature-sensitive materials.
- Inspect roofs and structures before snow accumulation.
- Secure machinery and update maintenance records during seasonal shutdown.
- Review winter livestock care, feed access, and emergency power arrangements.

WINTER: Weather the Storm

HOMEOWNERS

- Keep exits, vents, utility meters, hydrants, and heating-system exhausts clear of snow.
- Remove snow from roofs only when necessary and when it can be done safely.
- Watch for ice dams, ceiling stains, frozen pipes, or unusual moisture.
- Maintain consistent heat, including when the home is temporarily vacant.
- Use portable heaters only according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep combustible materials away from fireplaces, heaters, and cooking equipment.
- Use traction materials carefully to reduce slips without unnecessarily harming vegetation or waterways.
- Check on neighbours or family members who may need assistance during severe weather.

BUSINESSES

- Inspect entrances, sidewalks, parking areas, and loading zones regularly.
- Keep written records of snow and ice inspections and maintenance.
- Monitor vacant, mechanical, storage, and sprinkler-system areas for low temperatures.
- Remove snow where it obstructs exits, drains, hydrants, vents, or emergency access.
- Watch roofs for drifting, blocked drainage, leakage, or signs of unusual stress.
- Maintain backup power and fuel for critical systems.
- Protect stock and equipment from water damage caused by frozen or burst pipes.

- Encourage remote or alternate operations when travel conditions create unnecessary risk.
- Record incidents and address hazards before they become recurring losses.

FARMS

- Keep lanes, barn entrances, fuel access, and emergency routes passable.
- Monitor roofs for drifting snow, ice buildup, water entry, or structural movement.
- Check livestock water, ventilation, heating, feeding, and alarm systems frequently.
- Protect machinery, batteries, fluids, and electronics from extreme cold.
- Maintain safe separation between heaters, bedding, feed, and combustible materials.
- Test generators and ensure safe fuel storage and ventilation.
- Watch for frozen pipes, hydrants, valves, and fire-protection equipment.
- Avoid unnecessary equipment idling and repair leaks that waste fuel or fluids.
- Maintain communications and contingency plans during prolonged storms or outages.

EVERY SEASON: Build Long-Term Resilience

ALL PROPERTIES

- Review insurance coverage annually and after significant changes.
- Maintain an up-to-date inventory with secure off-site or cloud-based copies.
- Keep emergency kits appropriate for occupants, employees, livestock, and local hazards.
- Develop evacuation, communication, continuity, and recovery plans.
- Install monitoring devices where they can provide early warning of water, fire, temperature, or equipment problems.
- Use durable, repairable, energy-efficient, and hazard-resistant materials when replacement becomes necessary.
- Consider resilience upgrades when repairing insured damage, subject to coverage and applicable requirements.
- Follow manufacturer instructions, building codes, environmental requirements, and qualified professional advice.
- Contact your insurance broker to discuss property changes, new equipment, occupancy changes, and available coverage.

4. Community Resilience

Sustainable loss prevention is a shared responsibility. We work with brokers, industry organizations, policyholders, and communities to better understand local and emerging risks, share practical loss-prevention information, and support preparedness for severe weather and other unexpected claim events.

5. Responsible Business Operations

We're working to use energy, paper, and other resources responsibly across our operations. We measure energy consumption and associated greenhouse gas emissions, recycle securely shredded

paper and electronic equipment, track operational waste, and look for opportunities to reuse or donate materials and improve building efficiency. We've also recently consolidated office spaces and started to transition our company vehicles to hybrid alternatives.

We also consider environmental and climate risks as part of our broader approach to risk management and business planning. We assess physical risks, such as storms, wildfires and floods, as well as transition risks arising from regulatory, market and technological change. These considerations inform decisions across underwriting, pricing, claims, investments, capital planning, operations and strategy.

6. Governance, Risk Management and Transparency

Climate considerations are integrated into our established governance and enterprise risk management framework. The board and its committees provide oversight, while the senior leadership team is responsible for identifying and managing climate-related risks. Physical and transition risks are assessed using the company's existing risk methodology and are considered through risk appetite, strategic planning, operational decision-making, internal controls, and regular risk reporting. This integrated approach helps us monitor changing exposures and supports our long-term resilience as well as that of our policyholders and the communities we serve.

For more information related to climate resiliency, please see our public climate report:

https://www.portagemutual.com/company/reports