THE FACILITIES SURVIVAL GUIDE

A field guide to buildings with… big personalities.

THREADS 2026 Designing Behavioral Health Facilities: Lessons from Vision to Operation

Facilities truth: the building is not separate from the program. It is part of the program's ability to deliver services.





THE ROOF-ON-FIRE PLOT TWIST

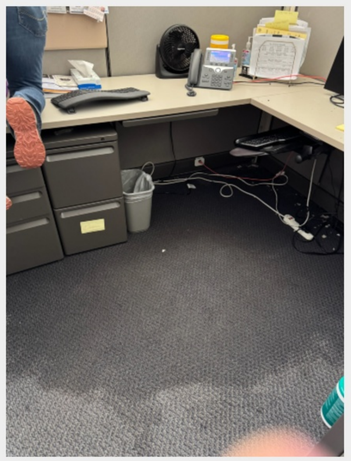
When the roof repair becomes the emergency.

Lesson: Contractor oversight, hot-work controls, and a response plan matter. The repair invoice may be only the opening act.

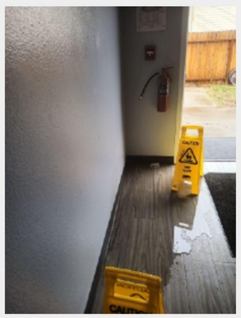
SAME BUILDING, THIS TIME WITH WATER.

Because one incident apparently wasn't enough.

Lesson: Verify scope, protect occupied areas, and document conditions before, during, and after work.







THE NEW CAMERA, NOW FEATURING RAIN

Security upgrade meets surprise water feature.

Lesson: Coordinate roof, envelope, and equipment work so one improvement doesn't damage another.

THE FLOODING DAMAGE FROM INSIDE

A reminder that gravity never takes a day off.

Lesson: Secure work zones and protect people below active work areas.



WALLS GIVING US DIRT… LITERALLY

Open-concept design was not the assignment.

Lesson: Water intrusion and deteriorating materials can make rooms unusable.



Wind: 1. Canopy: 0.

Outdoor structures have entered the chat.

Lesson: Design and maintain exterior features for the weather they actually face.



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Chapter 2: Nature, plumbing, and physics are not on the project team.

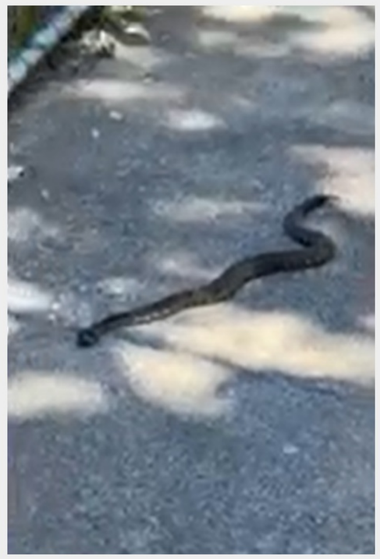
THE BOILER ROOM INDOOR POOL



Not the amenity anyone requested.

Lesson: Critical equipment needs inspections, drainage planning, and clear emergency response roles.

RATTLESNAKE: UNINVITED SITE INSPECTOR



One inspector who will not sign the visitor log.

Lesson: Include grounds, vegetation, pest risks, and safe access in routine site planning.

FIRE-STARTING ITEMS IN THE WOODS



The world's least reassuring scavenger hunt.

Lesson: Keep outdoor areas inspected, clear, and included in fire-prevention routines.



NATURAL FIRE: ZERO-STAR REVIEW

The landscape has submitted a very serious complaint.

Lesson: Plan for local hazards, evacuation, access, and continuity of operations.

GRAFFITI TAGGING: NEW ARTWORK ON THE NEW FENCE



Every facility has a plot twist. Some have several.

Lesson: Who pays for repairs and vandalism?

THE SURVIVAL CHECKLIST: BEFORE YOU LEASE, BUY, OR BUILD

Know the building: condition, remaining useful life, major systems, and likely replacement costs.

Know the deal: who pays for repairs, major systems, replacement, and capital improvements?

Know the Program: safety, privacy, licensing, accessibility, staff workflow, storage, and future flexibility.

Know the back-up plan: what happens if HVAC, plumbing, refrigeration, power, fire/life-safety, or security fails?

Bring Facilities in early: before the design is finished and the keys are handed over.

Facilities isn't just fixing buildings. We're helping protect safety, preserve service capacity, and make sure the program can keep doing its job.