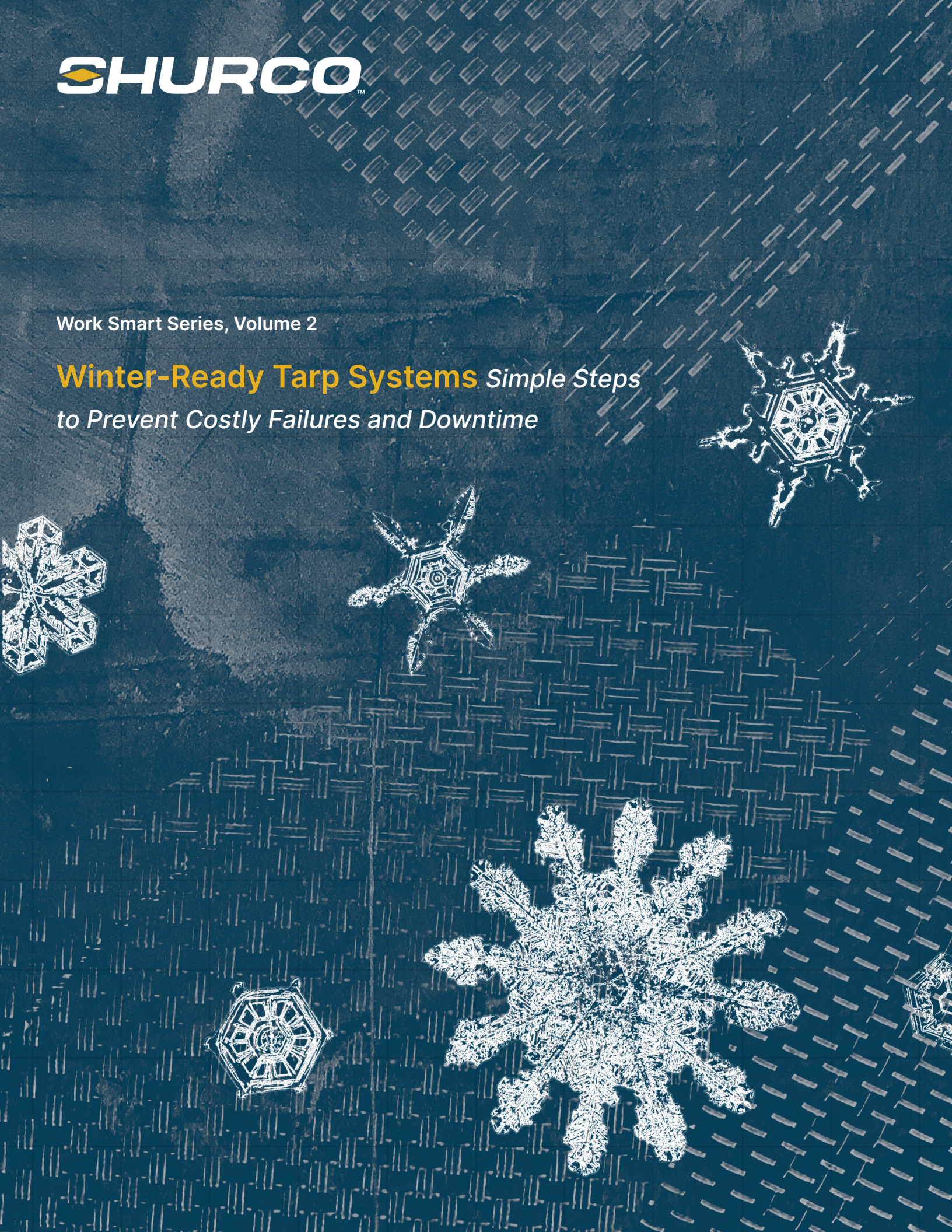




Work Smart Series, Volume 2

Winter-Ready Tarp Systems *Simple Steps*
to Prevent Costly Failures and Downtime



Overview

Winter brings some of the most demanding conditions your tarp system will face all year. As temperatures drop, salt, slush, and subzero weather accelerate wear on motors, gears, hydraulics, bearings, wiring, and even the tarp fabric itself. Without proper preparation, these conditions dramatically increase the likelihood of component failure—often resulting in repairs ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 once parts and labor are included.

Adding to the challenge, winter is also one of the busiest seasons for service centers. Lead times for critical components can stretch 5–7 days, and even longer when customization is needed. Combined with packed shop schedules, a single repair can extend downtime into multiple weeks.

Taking time now to winterize your system helps you avoid these preventable setbacks. This paper outlines the key steps to keep your equipment operating reliably throughout the coldest months.

Preparing Your System for Harsh Conditions

Optimal winter performance isn’t a matter of chance. It is the result of targeted preparation. Cold temperatures stiffen fabric, thicken grease, and cause metal components to contract. Moisture and road salt introduce additional stress, increasing the risk of tearing, freezing, binding, electrical issues, and premature wear.

The good news is that most cold-weather failures are avoidable. A tarp system that is cleaned, lubricated, inspected, and properly adjusted before winter is far more likely to run smoothly and avoid costly mid-season downtime.

The following five steps provide a clear, practical weatherization process designed to protect your tarp system, extend component life, and keep your fleet moving all season long.

1. Does the system provide real-time position feedback?

Start your winter prep with thorough cleaning and inspection.

- Wash completely: Rinse salt, mud, and debris from the tarp fabric, roll tubes, arms, motor, and housing. Left unchecked, salt can corrode steel and aluminum components.
- Check for damage: Look for rips, bends, cracks, or fatigued areas in both fabric and hardware. Repair or replace any worn parts before winter sets in.
- Inspect moving components: Rollers, cables, pulleys, and bearings should be intact and rolling freely.



Pro Tip: Cleaning and drying your system before storing or lubricating prevents trapped moisture—one of the biggest enemies of metal and fabric longevity.



2. Lubricate Moving Parts

Cold weather thickens grease and can seize friction points.

- Apply cold-weather grease to pivots, roll tubes, arm hinges, pulleys, and any moving component.
- Use dielectric grease on electrical connections (for electric systems) to block moisture and corrosion.



Pro Tip: Regular lubrication ensures smoother operation and extends the life of your mechanical parts when the mercury drops.

3. Test the Electrical System

For electric tarp systems, frigid temperatures can drain battery power and stiffen wiring.

- Check battery voltage: Confirm it meets specifications, typically 12 volts. Cold weather lowers voltage output.
- Tighten and seal connections: Moisture can cause shorts or corrosion, so double-check all connectors.
- Run a function test: Cycle the system several times to confirm smooth operation and detect any lag or weakness early.

4. Adjust Tension and Alignment

Cold materials lose flexibility, making proper alignment critical.

- Square the arms and verify the tarp rolls evenly.
- Check cable tension and adjust if needed. But be sure to avoid over tightening.
- Listen and watch: Binding or uneven rolling can signal alignment or tension issues.



Pro Tip: A well-aligned system reduces strain on motors and keeps tarps rolling smoothly in freezing temps.

5. Get in Front of Harsh Weather

A few preparations can make a difference once the cold sets in:

- Cover exposed electrical components.
- When possible, store trucks indoors to limit ice buildup.
- Clear snow/ice from tarps before operating to prevent tearing.
- Run the system on mild days to keep parts moving.

Conclusion

Winter doesn’t have to slow you down. With a little preparation, your tarp system will perform reliably through the coldest months. Routine inspection, lubrication, and proper storage not only extend component life, they protect your investment season after season.

For replacement parts, cold-weather grease, or service support, contact your local Shurco™ distributor or visit shurco.com.



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