

Facility Preparation

Current as of July 6, 2020

Before resuming operations on campus, the university will perform safety evaluations of all buildings prior to re-occupancy. Facility inspections are necessary to ensure that plumbing and electrical systems work properly, doors can be secured, heating ventilation and cooling systems function properly and are modified if necessary, and to conduct routine maintenance on safety equipment such as emergency showers and eyewash stations. Fire alarm and suppression systems testing and inspections have continued since the closure of campus without interruption.

During an extended period in the spring of 2020 many university buildings were unoccupied. As a result, laboratory safety systems and some building systems were not routinely operated, inspected, or deviated from routine maintenance schedules. In order to ensure that these systems are operating in optimal/reliable condition and operating per relevant building codes, proposed Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) Program regulations and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, the university will conduct a review of building systems to ensure that buildings are safe and operable for re-occupancy. The below methodologies will ensure that all of these systems are operating optimally, in compliance with recognized or proposed codes, and considering current CDC guidelines:

1. **Fire Safety Walkthrough:** During the absence of faculty, staff, and students, fire safety suppression and alarm systems were routinely operated, checked, and inspected per Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code (SFPC). The adherence to the Virginia SFPC will continue leading up to the reopening of activities on campus and beyond. This will include Fire Safety walkthrough inspections of buildings.
2. **Plumbing:** All building plumbing systems have been routinely flushed. Building flushing is tracked using internal work tracking systems. After flushing, domestic cold water is tested for chlorine residual (free, total, and/or combined chlorine) using EPA recognized N,N-diethyl-p-phenylenediamine (DPD) colorimetric process. The building flushing process is an ongoing process to assure that there is reliable drinking water with the appropriate chlorine residual present.
3. **Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC):** CDC guidelines for HVAC were evaluated for feasibility and practicability and the university will take the following actions: run the building ventilation systems full time even during unoccupied times beginning August 4, 2020 to increase ventilation of spaces after occupancy by staff and students; increase outdoor air supply to the maximum level achievable by each building system; verify all exhaust fans are operational; verify filter housing and racks are appropriate to minimize bypass; and recommend to occupants they open operable windows to provide natural ventilation. Facilities Maintenance staff will use a “building start up” safety checklist to inspect all HVAC systems and/or building automation systems.
4. **Laboratory Safety:** EHS conducted walkthroughs of laboratories on all campuses that included: testing emergency shower and eye wash units in laboratories and non-laboratory spaces, verifying proper function of chemical fume hoods, continuing annual

certification of biosafety cabinets, verifying contents of spill kits, checking for egress issues, spills, leaks, electrical problems, wet ceiling tiles, chemical storage, and other issues in laboratory spaces, and placing work orders with Facilities Maintenance as needed to repair equipment prior to reopening campus.

Fire Safety Systems inspections have been ongoing throughout the Safer at Home Executive Order. Plumbing system flushing and quality control checks have occurred on a routine basis since early May. All HVAC systems and building automation systems are currently being evaluated for the above CDC recommendations. The use of Mason's "building start up" safety checklist will occur before general re-occupancy of campus buildings in August. Laboratory Safety Walkthroughs were completed in May and June with annual biosafety cabinet certifications continuing as needed. Additionally, annual chemical fume hood testing is scheduled for June and July.

The inspection of each mechanical system item will be performed and documented through existing internal compliance databases and work order systems. It is anticipated that the regular inspection of fire safety, plumbing, HVAC, and Laboratory Safety systems will continue, and normal maintenance and testing schedules will resume with some impact on staffing. Staff will be reassigned as necessary to address all maintenance necessary to building safety and re-occupancy before instruction resumes on campus.