Facilities Management

Frequently Asked Questions about Campus Building Systems and Utilities

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INDOOR AIR QUALITY QUESTIONS

- **What is the University doing to protect indoor air quality?**
    - The University is adjusting the operation of our heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to maximize the fresh air that we are bringing in from outside and minimize recirculation by:
        - Purging buildings with central air handling units (not window units) with three (3) air exchanges before daily occupancy.
        - Disabling demand-based ventilation systems to ensure adequate fresh-air exchanges.
    - The University is upgrading the types of air filters (including MERV 13) that are compatible with our equipment. The University is also updating the replacement schedules for these filters to provide the highest possible indoor air quality that meets or exceeds federal guidelines/recommendations.

- **Does the University use ultraviolent (UV-C) light in our air filtration systems?**
    - UV-C is integrated in some research and Medical Center facilities air handling systems (AHUs). Specific research towards UV-C effectiveness on COVID-19 is emerging and ASHRAE[1] has endorsed the use of UV-C as a component of filtration and disinfection. UK is exploring the most effective practices and applications of UV-C in our facilities.

- **Should I prop open my doors and/or leave windows open?**
    - Windows and doors should only be left open if the building has been reviewed and approved by Facilities Management. This is important to ensure relative humidity stays below the recommended threshold[2] for preventing mold.

[1] American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has developed an Epidemic Task Force to guide the Reopening of facilities such as Schools and Universities.
[2] ASHRAE recommends that indoor relative humidity be maintained at or below 65% [ANSI/ASHRAE 2013b]. The EPA recommends maintaining indoor relative humidity between 30 and 60% to reduce mold growth [EPA 2012].

- Window fans should be positioned to blow air outside of the space, not into the space and across people.

- **What about window air conditioning (AC) units? Are they safe to use**?

  - Yes, window AC units are safe to use and the University conducts regular maintenance on all window AC units to check filters and coils.
  - Check the settings on your unit and toggle off the recirculation function to maximize outside air intake. It is important to ensure relative humidity stays below the threshold (see above) for preventing mold.
  - Position the discharge fins to blow air up and away from occupants.

WATER QUALITY AND MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS:

- **Is there any concern about stagnant water in sinks, fountains, toilets, or other fixtures?**

  - The University has maintained a flushing schedule to prevent stagnation. UK also monitors and maintains wet traps (vapor barriers) in all drains to prevent sewer gases from entering the facility. If you have concerns about the water quality coming from your sink, run the water for 30-60 seconds prior to first use, or after extended lack of use.

- **Why aren't the water fountains turned on?**

  - All campus water fountains are turned off to prevent the spread of germs. However, all of the automated bottle filling options will be activated so you can refill your own bottle.

- **Where can I find a water bottle filling station?**

  - Bottle filling stations have been installed in over many campus buildings. UK has integrated the location of water bottle filling stations on the interactive web map: https://maps.uky.edu/campusmap/?Layers=ShowWaterStations

- **Is the University expanding the use of automation in buildings to reduce the need to touch surfaces?**

  - Yes, the use of automation (auto-flushing, touchless dispensing, etc.) in campus restrooms is being expanded, with a priority on high volume buildings, to minimize touchpoints. Most facilities have push-button options for opening the outside doors that can be activated with your foot or hip.

- **What sources of information is Facilities Management using to make decisions about building systems and utilities?**

    - The University of Kentucky is using guidance from the US Centers for Disease Control (CDC)[i], Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)[ii], American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)[iii], National Institutes of Health (NIH)[iv], Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)[v], UK Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)[vi], private energy consultants, and information from peer institutions to determine best practices for operating our building systems and utilities.

If you have further questions about air and water quality in your building, please contact:

- Harold Sandford for Campus Academic, Research or Athletic Facilities at 859-257-4385 or hsandfor@uky.edu.
- Paul Ducharme for Medical Center Facilities at 859-257-7569 or paul.ducharme@uky.edu.

[i] US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is the nation's health protection agency and works to protect America from health, safety, and security threats and is the United States' leading authority on infectious diseases.
[ii] Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) works to ensure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education, and assistance.
[iii] American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) has developed an Epidemic Task Force to guide the Reopening of facilities such as Schools and Universities.
[iv] National Institutes of Health (NIH), a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is the nation's medical research agency.
[v] The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a mission to protect human health and the environment.
[vi] UK Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) supports the University's teaching, research, and public service mission by promoting a safe, healthful, clean, and accessible campus environment.