

To: Interested Lessors for State Agency Tenants

From: Regina M. Leccese, Design and Construction Program Manager

cc: State Agency Stakeholders
Seth Wallace, DES Assistant Director
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Re: "Safe Start" Return to Workplace – Building Systems Preparation

The Department of Enterprise Services, Real Estate Services (RES) is responsible for the acquisition of leased space facilities for state agencies, boards and commissions. We are reaching out to Lessors about how they can participate in creating the safest possible work environments for their tenants as they prepare to return to the workplace.

State agencies housed in leased facilities are continuing to develop plans for returning to the workplace as permitted under the Governor's "Safe Start – Stay Healthy" proclamation (20-25) for phased re-opening. All businesses, including state offices, must follow the requirements outlined in Washington Department of Labor and Industries publication "COVID-19 Workplace Safety and Health Requirements," (<https://www.lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/f414-169-000.pdf>). These requirements include, among others, operational changes, personal protective equipment (PPE) measures, physical distancing, and increased janitorial requirements.

While there are currently no mandates for building systems modifications, there may be steps that can be taken to modify or improve building systems operations to create a safer workplace. The two most critical systems are the building water system, and the HVAC system.

LEGIONELLA PREVENTION

The Washington Department of Health has issued the publication "Guidance for Legionella and Building Water Systems Closures" (Version 5, dated 9/14/20). Lessors should refer to this document for guidance on how to prepare your facility for occupancy if the plumbing has been stagnant or underutilized. (<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/LegionellaandBuildingWaterSystemClosuresCOVID-19.pdf>) It is strongly recommended that lessors plan for flushing the building water system prior to a facility being re-occupied. Additional precautions should be taken for facilities with cooling towers.

HEATING, VENTILATING AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

RES refers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for guidance on HVAC operations for combatting the spread of Coronavirus. The following is taken from their website (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/office-buildings.html>):

- Consider taking steps to improve ventilation in the building, in consultation with an HVAC professional, based on local environmental conditions (temperature/humidity) and ongoing community transmission in the area:
 - Increase the percentage of outdoor air, (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).
 - Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
 - Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
 - Consider using natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows if possible and safe to do so) to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
 - Improve central air filtration:
 - [Increase air filtration](#) to as high as possible without significantly diminishing design airflow.
 - Inspect filter housing and racks to ensure appropriate filter fit and check for ways to minimize filter bypass.
 - Consider running the HVAC system at maximum outside airflow for 2 hours before and after occupied times, in accordance with [industry standards](#).
- Ensure exhaust fans in restroom facilities are functional and operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.

Tenant agencies may consider additional measures such as portable HEPA air filtration, depending on their needs. At this time, RES does not recommend the installation of ultraviolet (UVGI) lamp system in air supply ducts.

End of Memorandum

REFERENCES

Additional detailed information can be found in a document entitled “BUILDING READINESS,” prepared by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE): (<https://www.ashrae.org/file%20library/technical%20resources/covid-19/ashrae-building-readiness.pdf>)