

COVID-19 PANDEMIC: PROPERTY LOSS PREVENTION

Universities

At FM Global we remain committed to providing our clients with the best property loss prevention advice to keep your facilities resilient and safe, particularly during these challenging times. Universities are adapting rapidly to the new demands caused by these challenges. These changes, however, can have an impact on property risks and resulting business interruption for universities. At this time, we are seeing possible impacts in the following areas:

- ☐ Emergency organization resources
- ☐ Maintenance of smoke detection and fire alarm systems
- ☐ Use of temporary and alternative housing
- ☐ Need to store additional supplies
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Installation of separation screens or partitions and obstructions to automatic sprinklers

PROPERTY LOSS PREVENTION ADVICE

To assist in your efforts to mitigate the potential impact of risks, the following loss prevention advice will help keep your properties resilient and safe.

- ☐ Emergency Organization
 - Review emergency plans for fire, water leaks and natural hazards and consider changes needed based on any temporary measures taken. This could include potential reduction or reassignment of staff to meet social distancing protocols, potential delay of restoration contractors or delayed public safety response.
 - Develop plans for the newly created temporary or alternative spaces.
 - Update, communicate and conduct practice drills of emergency response plans.
- ☐ Maintain Fire Protection Systems
 - Maintain smoke detection and fire alarm systems in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
 - If using an atomization spray to disinfect large areas, discuss the effects on

sensitivity of smoke detection and cleaning of the detectors with your smoke detection and alarm service company.

- Maintain automatic sprinkler systems by testing water flow alarms and conducting valve inspections.

☐ Use of Temporary and Alternative Housing

- Determine if temporary housing is protected with automatic sprinklers. If it is not, consider other options and adjust emergency organization plans appropriately.

☐ Storage of Additional Supplies

- Consider storage space for the potential increase of personal protective equipment, cleaning or disinfecting solutions and other supplies needed on campus.
- Identify appropriate areas for storage, with adequate automatic sprinkler protection.
- Review adequacy of fire protection systems.
 - » Hand sanitizer is an ignitable liquid that needs additional protection. The majority of hand sanitizers contain either ethyl or isopropyl alcohol (flash point around 55°F/13°C) and glycerin. Consider storing in FM Approved flammable liquid cabinets.
 - » Increase in the use and storage of plastic materials (such as gloves and plastic food containers) can affect the adequacy of sprinkler protection.



□ Research

- Identify if alternative methods are being used to conduct research or lab activities, such as temporary spaces or at home.
- Ensure proper protection (e.g., continuous power supply, ventilation, ignitable liquid storage) and storage arrangements, especially for refrigerator or freezer use.
- Use an easy-to-read temperature indicator with alarm on the refrigeration or freezer units and check the temperature on a regular basis.
- Label circuit breakers “Do not disconnect” and outlets “Do not unplug.”
- For additional information regarding recommendations, valuation and loss examples, see Protecting Research Freezers and Refrigerators (P13028)
- Ensure any heat sources (e.g., hot plates) are shutdown when leaving.

□ Installation of Separation Screens or Partitions

- When and where possible, use alternatives to the installation of partitions or screens, such as changes to the workspace usage and layout, by staggering workers over shifts and/or providing separation distances.
- When installing separation screens or partitions:
 - » Consider the use of noncombustible products (appropriate type glass) or FM Approved products, if applicable for the use.
 - » The use of PMMA, acrylic, plexiglass or other thermoplastic material is discouraged due to their combustibility.
 - » Ensure sprinkler protection is not obstructed by the installation of the screens.

USEFUL RESOURCES

These FM Global resources can provide you with additional information:

- FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 10-2 Emergency Response
- FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 5-40 Fire Alarm Systems
- FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 5-48 Automatic Fire Detection
- FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 8-9 Storage of Class 1,2,3,4 and Plastic Commodities
- FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 7-29 Ignitable Liquid Storage in Portable Containers
- FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 2-0 Installation Guideline for Automatic Sprinklers
- FM Global Property Loss Prevention Data Sheet 2-81 Fire Protection System Inspection, Testing and Maintenance
- **Understanding the Hazard: Lack of Emergency Response P0034**
- **Pandemic Cyber Loss Prevention Checklist Information Security W152550C**
- **Natural Hazards – Pandemic Property Loss Prevention W152550S**
- **Understanding the Hazard: Lack of Automatic Sprinklers P0037**
- Protecting Research Freezers and Refrigerators (P13028)

For more information and methods for addressing loss prevention concerns at your facility, refer to the free resources on FM Global’s website at [fmglobal.com](https://www.fmglobal.com). FM Global and AFM clients can contact their account engineer.



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