



New York State Department of Health Air Filtration and Building Systems Guidelines

Below is a summary of requirements for businesses that must comply with New York State's enhanced air filtration, ventilation and purification standards. For purposes of this document, Responsible Parties is the business owner or operator.

- Responsible Parties must ensure central heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system filtration meets the highest rated filtration compatible with the currently installed filter rack and air handling systems, at a minimum MERV-13, or industry equivalent or greater (e.g., HEPA), as applicable, and as certified and documented by a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, an American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE)-certified professional, a certified HVAC commissioning professional, or a New York State licensed professional building engineer.
 - Responsible Parties should also consider adopting additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and ASHRAE recommendations, particularly for buildings with air handling systems older than 15 years, including:
 - Performing necessary retro- or recommissioning of central systems, and testing, balancing, and repairs as needed;
 - Increasing ventilation rates and outdoor air ventilation to the extent possible;
 - Keeping systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy;
 - Disabling demand-controlled ventilation, where reasonable, and maintain systems that increase fresh air supply;
 - Maintaining relative humidity between 40 to 60% where possible;
 - Opening outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate recirculation to the extent possible;
 - Sealing edges of the filter to limit bypass;
 - Regularly inspecting systems and filters to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life;
 - Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort;
 - Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or
 - Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), consider units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts.
- For facilities with central air handling systems that cannot handle the minimum level of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater):
 - Responsible Parties must have a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, an ASHRAE-certified professional, a certified HVAC commissioning professional, or New York State licensed professional building engineer certify and document that the currently installed filter rack is incompatible with minimum level of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater) and/or the air handling system would be unable to perform to the minimum level of heating and cooling that it was otherwise able to provide prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency if such a high degree of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater) was installed.

- Responsible Parties must keep such documentation to operate at a lesser filtration rating with additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols and make available to the state or local health department officials upon request.
- Responsible Parties with facilities that have a central air handling system who are unable to meet a filtration rating of MERV-13 or greater must adopt additional ventilation and/or air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations, including:
 - Performing necessary retro-commissioning of central systems, and, balancing, and repairs as needed;
 - Increasing ventilation rates and outdoor air ventilation to the extent possible;
 - Keeping systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy;
 - Disabling demand-controlled ventilation, where reasonable, and maintain systems that increase fresh air supply;
 - Maintaining relative humidity between 40 to 60% where possible;
 - Opening outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate recirculation to the extent possible;
 - Sealing edges of the filter to limit bypass;
 - Regularly inspecting systems and filters to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life;
 - Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort;
 - Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or
 - Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), considering units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts.
- For facilities that do not have central air handling systems, Responsible Parties must adopt additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations, including:
 - Regularly inspecting any room ventilation systems (e.g., window units, wall units) to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life;
 - Keeping any room ventilation systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy;
 - Setting room ventilation systems to maximize fresh air intake, set blower fans to low speed and point away from occupants to the extent possible;
 - Maintaining relative humidity between 40 to 60% where possible;
 - Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort;
 - Setting any ceiling fans to draw air upwards away from occupants, if applicable;
 - Prioritizing window fans to exhaust indoor air where possible;
 - Avoiding using fans that only recirculate air or only blow air into a room without providing for appropriate exhaust;
 - Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or
 - Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), considering units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts.
- Before occupants return to a building that has been entirely closed, Responsible Parties must complete pre-return checks, tasks, and assessments to ensure a healthy and safe environment. These systems include, but are not limited to, mechanical systems, water systems, elevators, and HVAC systems.

- Depending on the length of time equipment has been inactive, Responsible Parties should run systems with careful observation to ensure machinery (e.g., valves and switches) are operating correctly.
- Specific system actions may be required to restart systems after prolonged shutdown. Responsible Parties may determine necessity for each of these items based on length of shutdown and condition as inspected.
- As appropriate and applicable, Responsible Parties should flush building with fresh air based on the design of the makeup/outside air system for a minimum of 24 hours.
- Responsible Parties must ensure air filters are replaced as needed (e.g., after flushing the building).
- Responsible Parties must ensure maintenance and monitoring of cooling towers have been conducted in accordance with state regulations and that chemical and microbial levels are within 10 defined ranges for any closed water systems and/or water features, and drain any devices that may contain stagnant water.
- Responsible Parties must flush cold- and hot-water systems in accordance with building water management plan, if applicable.
- Responsible Parties must ensure any water filters are replaced as needed after flushing the building's water systems.
- Responsible Parties should ensure that the operation of all mechanical equipment and systems has been restored prior to reopening the building.

The NYC Health Department may change recommendations as the situation evolves.

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