

General questions

Why was campus lacking cooling (air conditioning)?

On June 17, a chilled water main supply line at one of the three heating and cooling plants that serve campus suffered a significant break. Chilled water provides cooling (air conditioning) for campus. Using chilled water system adjustments, capacity at the remaining two cooling plants, and temporary chillers, UW–Madison reopened all buildings on August 10.

Because campus will still have some cooling capacity limitations, there may be times when facility temperature setpoints are slightly higher than normal, but the instances and differences in cooling are expected to be minimal. Critical research and patient care areas will continue to be prioritized.

Is campus open for business and operating normally?

All campus buildings reopened Aug. 10. There may be times when facility temperature setpoints are slightly higher than normal, but the instances and differences in cooling are expected to be minimal.

Employee questions

What resources are available if I have workplace environmental or occupational health concerns?

FP&M Environmental & Occupational Health (EOH) is available to assist with workplace environmental and occupational health questions or concerns. If you have concerns about your workplace environment or believe a health concern may be related to your work environment, please contact EOH at eoh@fpm.wisc.edu. EOH will review the information, provide guidance and coordinate any appropriate follow-up.

Building questions

Can I bring a portable cooling device and air conditioner to help cool or air out my office?

To ensure our building's electrical and cooling systems run efficiently, please do not bring in any personal or window air conditioning units. Standard personal fans are permitted.

My area smells different. Why?

Although some campus buildings had less or no cooling during the closure, all buildings had consistent air movement via HVAC. However, when facilities are closed during hot

weather, stale air can develop, and the heat can bring out natural smells from building materials, furnishings and accumulated dust. During the closure, FP&M staff walked buildings and took temperature and humidity measurements. No conditions were found to be unsafe, but in some instances, temporary fans or dehumidifiers were installed.

As FP&M restarted cooling, most stagnant air cycled out. However, some enclosed spaces, such as offices, may have a stale smell due to being closed up. Please leave your door open and/or turn on a window air conditioning unit to let fresh air in. *Do not open windows, as this will disrupt the HVAC for your building.*

If you feel your space is not airing out or you have other concerns, please work with your building manager to contact Physical Plant Customer Service at 608-263-3333.

How do I get my mail and packages?

Mail and packages (including campus, US Postal, FedEx, Spee-Dee and UPS) have returned to normal operations,

Where do I get more information?

Contact your supervisor, who can contact your dean's office. If you need further assistance, contact ChilledWaterConcerns@wisc.edu.

What is Facilities Planning & Management doing to make sure buildings are safe for return?

While buildings were closed or partially closed, FP&M continued operations to facilitate a safe, efficient reopening:

- **Monitoring:** FP&M Physical Plant staff conducted building walkthroughs to monitor building condition, temperature and humidity levels. They actively identified high-humidity areas and implemented mitigation measures as needed. Additionally, building managers also monitored facilities.
- **Custodial services:**
 - Custodial services have been restored to previous levels. Staff also cleaned buildings before reopening.
 - In impacted buildings, services were limited, but staff still continued routine checks on closed or partially closed buildings to monitor for any urgent needs.
 - Removal of waste and recycling by Custodial Services return to previous service levels August 10.

- **Water:** Before reopening, water was flushed in closed and partially closed buildings to remove standing water and help maintain water quality.
- **Air:**
 - Air filters remain installed in HVAC systems. These filters are designed to capture most fine particulate matter, whether the air conditioning is on or not.
 - All buildings received some form of HVAC service during the closure. In closed or partially closed buildings, FP&M intermittently cycled air conditioning, as available, to help circulate air and lower humidity.
- **Continued service:** If a space in your building needs maintenance or custodial attention, please work with your building manager. In case of emergency, please contact FP&M Physical Plant Customer Service at 608-263-3333.

What do I do if I feel like the temperature of my space is not right?

Please work with your [building manager](#) to contact [Physical Plant Customer Service](#).

When will the temporary chillers and generators go away?

At this time, the temporary chillers play a critical role in providing cooling to campus. Once they are no longer needed, both the chillers and generators will be removed.

Although inconvenient, this equipment does not pose safety risks to most populations. Noise and exhaust measurements near the equipment have not reached unsafe levels, and emergency egress from all facilities remain.

Does a musty smell mean there is mold?

Not always. Odors can occur for many reasons, and temporary odors usually occur due to high humidity and stagnant air, especially in areas with carpet, upholstered furniture, curtains, books and other porous materials. However, FP&M investigates any reports of persistent odors or visible growth, and remediation will be performed promptly where needed.

If you have concerns or are unsure if you have found suspected mold, please do not disturb it, do not use bleach or chemicals, and do not move water-damaged materials. Please notify your building manager or facility specialist so an Environment, Health & Safety staff member can address it.

How did you prevent mold, mildew and other problems while buildings were empty?

Mold is not expected in campus facilities, as all buildings received HVAC and many continued to receive some air conditioning during the closure, either at reduced capacity

or intermittently, to manage humidity. Building managers monitored facilities and FP&M Physical Plant and Environment, Health & Safety staff conducted walkthroughs to check on building condition, temperature and humidity levels. They actively identified high-humidity areas and implemented mitigation measures as needed.

Parking and transportation

If I canceled my parking permit while working from home but want to park on campus before August 31, what should I do?

There may be parking permits available. Space is limited, and there is no guarantee that permits will be available in your preferred lot. Learn about parking options through the end of summer by [contacting Transportation Services](#).

You can also park in a campus garage where visitor parking is available. Please note that parking availability varies, and hourly rates apply.

If I canceled my current parking permit, will my parking application for next year be affected?

No: canceling your current permit will not affect next year's parking permits. Transportation Services is currently accepting and processing applications for 2026-27 permits. Approved permits will be valid starting September 1. If you receive an assignment, accept it by the deadline as you normally would. Please [contact your Unit Transportation Coordinator \(UTC\) if you have questions](#).

How will parking work with the return to campus?

Parking continues with normal operations August 10.

If my bike was relocated, how can I find out where it is?

Bicycle racks and any bicycles moved to make room for temporary chiller units are relocated within the same building area. If you can't find your bike, [please complete the cyclist and pedestrian feedback form](#). If possible, please state when and where your bike was last seen and a physical description.