

June 2021

MANAGING YOUR FACILITIES

Newsletter for the National School Plant Management Association



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How to Optimize your District's Facilities Management Processes

Running a school district requires the coordination of countless moving parts. Still, effective facilities maintenance and management gives you the tools to organize and manage everything that needs to happen in your district.

More importantly, with excellent school facilities management practices in place, your teachers and students are free to focus on learning without distractions.

What are the benefits of facilities management for school districts?

Help students learn and help teachers teach: Studies have proved that learning environment has a significant impact on students' desire to participate and ability to learn in school. A well-maintained school building [keeps students engaged in academics, resulting in greater information retention in the classroom.](#)

Teachers also benefit from school facilities management investments. Studies have shown that a [well-maintained workplace for teachers can reduce turnover rates by as much as 25%.](#)

Reduce spending on facility management: It's a cliché, but school facilities management is no exception to the rule "you get out of it what you put into it." The more you invest in improving your facility management processes, the more you will see cost savings and improved efficiency.

Ultimately, school facility management reduces districts' labor, energy, and equipment costs.

Extend lifetime value of buildings and assets: Proper care and maintenance can significantly lengthen your assets' lifespan and improve their quality.

Utilizing techniques like [preventive maintenance scheduling](#) can ensure your team is properly caring for your district's assets.

Improve organization and decrease stress on facilities managers: Effective school facilities management systems take the guesswork and chaos out of running a district. With facilities management strategies to organize and simplify processes like maintenance requests, equipment rentals, and scheduling preventive maintenance, you'll reduce your team's stress levels.

How to get started

Getting started might seem like a big undertaking, but improving your school's facility management processes doesn't have to be an all-or-nothing system redesign. Small but effective changes can lead to significant improvement at low costs.

Maintenance checklists: To begin your school's facilities management journey, consider implementing [maintenance checklists](#). Checklists are an excellent way to ensure all tasks are completed fully, creating standardization across all technicians.

Preventive maintenance schedule: Creating a [preventive maintenance schedule](#) enables you to stay ahead of maintenance issues in your facility before they occur, decreasing work order backlog.

Work order request form: A comprehensive work order request form also goes a long way in improving communication between requesters and maintenance technicians. View [FMX's downloadable work order request form](#) for a free template.

To take things to the next level, [facilities management software for schools](#) centralizes, organizes, and automates all facilities management processes and helps districts take control of otherwise chaotic situations. Want to see it for yourself? [Schedule a product tour with one of FMX's facilities management software specialists!](#)

Have more questions about school facilities management or anything else regarding maintenance management in your district? [Ask the Advisors](#) is a panel of K-12 experts prepared to answer any question you send their way. [Check it out!](#)



The Benefits of a Building Security Risk Assessment

Tom Cxyz, CEO, Armoured One, LLC

Violent offenders are a constant consideration for school districts and the safety of their students and staff. While active shooter training and bullet-resistant products are ideal, not every school district can afford those premium products and services. That's where building security risk assessments come in. These assessments are an affordable solution to help school districts prioritize safety while staying within their budgets. As COVID-19 is prioritized for safety, school districts can still practice other forms of physical safety by utilizing this affordable option.

What Is A Building Security Risk Assessment?

A [building security risk assessment](#) is completed by a security expert to provide realistic solutions for the district to protect their campus. It shows districts where they are vulnerable to a violent offender and helps to direct a more comprehensive security plan. An assessment looks at areas such as building grounds, perimeter, entrances, interior, floor plans, and more. In addition to the thorough assessment, the security expert provides a set of recommendations to the district in order to harden the exterior and prevent an attack.

These assessments not only provide the district with cost-effective solutions, they help to keep a potential threat at bay, giving first-responders more time to respond to an incident. In addition, they help first-responders to be more efficient and effective when they arrive on scene giving them more opportunity to eliminate the threat. Combined with a comprehensive security plan, which should include members from [local law enforcement agencies](#), school districts are better prepared to protect the individuals inside their buildings.

Why Invest In An Assessment?

All too often, people believe that an active shooter incident will never happen in their community, let alone in one of their schools. However, history has proven that it can happen anywhere. That's why it is important for every school district in America to invest in assessments. According to the Wisconsin Department of Justice and their [Comprehensive School Security Framework](#), "A comprehensive school security assessment informs and guides the creation or revision of school safety plans, and ensures that plans and subsequent actions align to the five critical hazard areas as identified in statute: prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery."

With the recommendation to complete a new assessment [every five years](#), ensuring that your district is ready in the face of an emergency is paramount to safety and crucial for preventing liability issues. By not investing in assessments or comprehensive security plans, a district opens the door to liability suits in the instance an attack happens. Communities want to know that their school districts are taking security seriously. Building security risk assessments are an efficient and cost-effective solution to helping school district protect their students and staff while sticking to an already strained annual budget.

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**National School Safety Conference and National School Plant
Management Association Speakers: New Orleans**

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

1:00 pm: Presenter: Tom Czyz, CEO, Armoured One. New York. Presentation Title: Increase in Adolescence Mental Health Issues as a Catalyst for Active Shooter Codes.

2:30 pm: Presenter: Peter Cantone, CEO, Pandemic Solutions. New York. Presentation Title: AtmosAir Solutions, providing a cost effective and safe way to promote Indoor Air Quality technology with real efficacy.

4:00 pm: Presenter(s) Kara Hoffman, South Carolina and Liz Giddens, Georgia. BELFOR Property Restoration. Presentation Title: Emergency Preparedness; Guided by Intelligence and Informed by Experience.

Thursday, July 29, 2021

8:00 am: Presenter: Tom Casey, National Sales Director, Play and Park Structures, Tennessee. Presentation Title: Playground Safety and Maintenance in the Age of COVID.

9:30 am: Presenter: Tom Czyz, CEO, Armoured One. New York. Presentation Title: Active Shooter in America's Schools.

11:00 am: Presenter: Shannon Allen, Senior Account Executive, Johnson Controls. California. Presentation Title: Securing Schools Today and Tomorrow.

1:30 pm: Presenter: Dennis Berberich, EVP. New York. Presentation Title: CleanSmart, The Safest EPA Registered Disinfectant of the Market.

3:00 pm: Presenter: Darin Porter, Professional Services Manager, FMX. Ohio. Presentation Title: 5 Ways a Work Order System Can Improve School Safety.

The National School Plant Management Association Promotes
Excellence in Education Through Professional Facility Management

AtmosAir-IAQ

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) is increasingly recognized as a critical tool to help address the pandemic. While building code officials, engineers and other industry professionals have considered the importance of healthy IAQ in buildings, the public is now becoming more and more aware that the air we breathe has a major impact on our health. This is especially critical for K-12 schools since they are high-density, occupied spaces with a high degree of intermingling.

This paper will explore the background of IAQ, the fundamentals to ensure good IAQ, and best practices we can utilize to help mitigate the effect of this pandemic. These practices will also help make our buildings more resilient for additional IAQ issues and future pandemics.¹

Some Background

Subconsciously, we all know that proper ventilation, air filtration, and air purification has a major impact on our health and wellbeing. We have all experienced classrooms with little to no air flow, and a stale and sometimes odorous scent. Certainly, we feel relief with the simple act of opening a window just “to get air moving.” With regard to contagious viruses, the dynamic of the stale room is no different. By removing these nasty, microscopic particles (which are approximately 500-1,000 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair) from the indoor environment, we reduce the intensity and quantity of the virus and diminish its ability to infect more people.

Our ancestors knew this. In response to the Pandemic of 1918, when over 20,000 New Yorkers died², ventilation was recognized as one of the key attributes to protecting residents from the devastation of the pandemic. According to a recent article in Bloomberg³, New York City officials dictated that building heating systems were to be designed and sized to operate with all the windows open since ventilation was key to purge the virus from indoor spaces.

As the article quotes: *Health officials thought (correctly) that fresh air would ward off airborne diseases; then as now, cities rushed to move activities outdoors, from schools to courtrooms. When winter came, the need for fresh air didn't abate. According to [heating industry expert and author Dan] Holohan's research, the Board of Health in New York City ordered that windows should remain open to provide ventilation, even in cold weather. In response, engineers began devising heating systems with this extreme use case in mind.*

What was true a 100 years ago is true today: viral spread is transmitted from person to person, with air as the most common medium. If you can clean the air by purging with fresh air, filtration, and/or air cleaning devices, you can reduce the intensity of the viral spread. Reducing the quantity of contagious particles will reduce the intensity of the viral spread.

¹ Alexander D D, Bailey W H, Perez V, Mitchell M E, Su, S. “Air Ions and Respiratory Function Outcomes: A Comprehensive Review.” Journal of Negative Results in BioMedicine, September 9, 2013; 12, 14.
See: <https://doi.org/10.1186/1477-5751-12-14>

² The 1918 Influenza Epidemic in New York City: A Review of the Public Health Response

³ “Your Old Radiator is a Pandemic fighting Weapon”, Bloomberg City Lab-Patrick Sisson, August 5th, 2021

MIT recently came out with a thought-provoking study, which challenges the “6-foot rule”. The MIT study shows that although proximity to an infected person is important regarding an individual likelihood of contracting the virus, there are several other factors at play. In addition to masking quality and what activity is being performed, the amount of ventilation is also important, especially in the indoor environment. It stands to reason that if contraction of the virus is almost negligible outdoors, to the degree we can make indoor air quality like outdoor air, the less likely we are to have infection contagion within the indoor environment. Simply put, we need to do a better job of making our indoor environment more like our outdoor environment.

The Basics

Building Code requires the provision of fresh air ventilation and filtration of air for buildings with mechanical ventilation. For most K-12 environments, fresh air is provided by mechanical ventilation.

For both pandemic and traditional time periods it is critical that these systems are well maintained. Common issues that we typically find within the K-12 environment include:

- Mechanical issues such as loose belts and pulleys, dirty ductwork, and control problems limit the amount of fresh air.
 - Broken actuators and dampers reduce the amount of fresh air.
 - Filters that are not installed correctly, not maintained properly, etc. can limit the effectiveness of filtration systems.
 - Ductwork for spaces may create high hazard areas and may expose some occupants to a high dosage of potential infections.
 - Exhaust or return fans not properly working may allow particles to linger within a space for long periods of time.

Certainly, all the above-mentioned issues and any other additional issues are important in preventing high risk environments for our students and staff. To ensure the basics are being incorporated, we recommend a qualified third-party contractor check the design parameters to ensure the mechanical equipment is operating correctly.

Beyond the Basics - A Road to IAQ Excellence

Once the basics are understood and implemented, we can now develop a strategy to attain IAQ excellence. This strategy entails:

- Incorporating the basics of ventilation and filtration.
 - Air cleaning strategies - developing a strategy which best suits the facility and client needs.
 - Performance Testing - providing baseline and post installation testing. Preferably, perform a test demonstration before a mass installation. It's best to test and verify performance on a small scale rather than find the system isn't the correct application after a large investment.
 - Continuous Commissioning - integrating long-term monitoring into the continuous commissioning for the facility.

Further discussions on strategies beyond the basics are discussed on the following pages.

Air Cleaning Strategies

There are several air cleaning strategies available to the end user. The three main airside strategies (HEPA filtration, UV Airside, and Air Ionization) are discussed below.

Bipolar Ionization Technology (BPI): Bipolar Ionization systems work by producing charged particles which are emitted into the space. Ions have been shown to disrupt the physical and genetic structure of microbes, as well as induce an agglomeration effect on particulates they encounter. For this installation ions are distributed to the space via mechanical ventilation equipment, with the expectation that they will inactivate viruses through the production of hydroxyls. These hydroxyls latch onto viruses and rob them of the necessary hydrogen they need to survive.

This technology is advantageous in two main areas. One, the system installation is quite simple since this coil is typically much smaller than a HEPA filter or UVGI coil and can handle higher air velocities than the typical UVGI coil. And two, since the basis of the system is to generate ionized particles, the BPI system is more effective in neutralizing particles in the space. Other ionization technologies are demonstrably less effective in achieving these results.

We have found that bipolar ionization strategies are effective and efficient in neutralizing particles. However, BPI is not a silver bullet, nor is any solution, and a holistic approach that incorporates an active BPI technology is the best approach. Additionally, the HVAC systems must be in good working order. For the system to work properly the ionized particles must reach the space, which for a duct mounted system is only practical with a functioning system

HEPA Filtration: HEPA filtration has long been used for high-risk environments, such as hospital operating rooms. HEPA's can be effective in removing air side contaminants due to the fine mesh nature of the filter, which if designed, constructed, and maintained properly can remove over 99% of particles from the airstream. The ability of the HEPA filter to remove particles will be a function of how well the air is exchanged within a space, measured in air changes per hour, and how well the air distribution pattern is.

For K-12 schools the utilization of centralized HEPA units will be few and far between, since it is highly unlikely that traditional systems can accommodate the physical installation of a HEPA filter. These systems can be quite large and will require extensive ductwork modifications, and the added resistance to airflow will likely reduce airflow dramatically. Centralized HEPA units are less than optimal since typically existing conditions will require an expensive renovation project, and if not done correctly, can compromise airflow to the space which compromises the IAQ of the space.

Placement of the HEPA units within the classroom environment is possible with some success since this strategy offers a low-cost solution with potential quick results. However, if this strategy is implemented, consideration must be given to several factors which may compromise the effectiveness of the unit. These factors include:

- The performance of the unit will highly depend on users keeping the fans on. This means teachers and staff must monitor the units and buy into their operation. This can be tough to manage and administer in a school environment since teachers typically, and rightfully so, want to maintain control of their classroom.
- Noise: Local HEPA units can be very noisy. We have observed where staff will turn the units off and/or place at a low-speed setting, which totally defeats the purpose the HEPA filter.
- Placement: Need to be concerned with unintended consequences of introducing air currents into space.
- Maintenance issues: Typically filters need to be replaced at least one or twice a year. Note that since viruses and bacteria are not deactivated in a HEPA filter, the filters need to be changed out by qualified personnel.

Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI): UVGI is another technology which has been around for a long time and has had a measure of success. In typical applications, a UVGI coil is added to an air handling unit and/or supply duct, but standalone/portable units are also available. If properly designed, installed, and maintained, the air will sterilize as it passes by the coil.

The main downside of this technology is that it will sterilize only the air which passes across the coil, which makes the system highly dependent on the effectiveness of the air handling and distribution system. Also, this type of system will not sterilize air on surfaces since the particles on surfaces, unless disturbed, will not return to the air handling unit via the ductwork. on surfaces since the particles on surfaces, unless disturbed, will not return to the air handling unit via the ductwork.

Another concern is cost. It has been our experience that for retrofit applications the installation of these units can be expensive, since typically there are spatial issues and the need to make duct modifications. If this option is considered, we recommend that a cost benefit analysis be conducted comparing UVGI to other technologies.

Performance Testing

Clients are being inundated with new technologies, often with conflicting claims. Once getting beyond the basics of proper filtration and ventilation, which is universal for most buildings, we recommend that air cleaning technologies be evaluated with the help of a qualified independent expert. In addition to constructability review and cost estimate, the expert should guide the client in performance testing. The performance test should simply test to verify vendor claims. In general, the following table is a good guide for performance testing.

Technology	Temp/RH	Airflow (cfm)	Particle Count	Ions	Ozone ⁴	VOC
HEPA filtration	Y	Y	N	N	N	N
UVGI	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N
Bipolar Ionization	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

On the following page is a summary of a recent performance test for a downstate New York High School. Trending was completed to test for system performance of above variables. The top photo shows the testing equipment, while the bottom photo shows the results. By conducting the test in a transparent manner, the performance of the equipment can be verified, thus validating that the investment is resulting in tangible benefits.

⁴ Since ozone is a variable of high concern, we recommend the ozone be measured at three locations: Outdoors, at discharge of unit, and in operating space.



COMPILED DATA										
Trial	Particle Size and Count (per ft ³)						Average Ion Reading (per cm ²)	Ozone (ppm)	Ozone (ppb)	VOC (ppm)
	0.3um	0.5um	1.0um	2.0um	5.0um	10.0um				
Rm 122 - Baseline	990,222	91,092	12,060	5,468	972	363	262	0.00044	0.44	6
Rm 122 - Ionizer Running	649,289	57,777	6,119	2,197	296	119	1,411	0.00322	3.22	2
Percent Change	-34%	-37%	-49%	-60%	-70%	-67%	439%	626%	626%	-69%

From the above test results one can see that ions are up dramatically, VOCs are reduced (indicator that particles are neutralized), and Ozone is at an acceptable level (at least in zone space). From this data we can see the unit is working as intended with no notable deleterious effects.

Continuous Commissioning

Once the basics of ventilation and filtration are completed, with an indoor air cleaning technology system which has been implemented, tested, and proven to perform, a long-term monitoring plan will help sustain the performance for years to come.

A long-term monitoring plan should follow the following principles:

1. Leverage existing BMS as much as possible.
2. Ensure basic variables, such as monitoring filter pressure drop, total airflow, and outdoor air flow, as a first step.
3. Set up reporting which is simple to understand.
4. Focus on primary variables. For example, if the intent is to limit particles and maximize ions, such as through BPI technology, then these are the two variables you want to monitor and trend.

Data should be easily retrievable and reported on a consistent basis, with designated personnel responsible for these tasks. Fifteen minute or hourly intervals are typically acceptable. If problems can be identified and fixed in a timely manner, then we can maximize the IAQ performance of our buildings and improve the health and well-being of the occupants.

Conclusion

Rebuilding our society after the devastation of the Covid-19 pandemic will take time and significant investment. We as a society will need to utilize several tools to help rebuild a better, more verdant future. Indoor Air Quality is one of the most effective tools to improve our buildings health today, and to help fortify our buildings for future pandemics.

By adopting a pragmatic approach starting with the basics of filtration and ventilation; applying air cleaning technologies, testing performance, and continued monitoring; we can help maximize the benefits of our IAQ investments.

About the Author

Jeremy McDonald, PE, is a Principal at Guth DeConzo Consulting Engineers, PC where he designs, installs, and commissions HVAC systems and IAQ technologies. Mr. McDonald's previous experience includes serving as an adjunct professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where he taught principles of building systems, including IAQ technologies.

Playground Safety & Maintenance in the Age of the Corona Virus



With over 200,000 playground injuries each year requiring a trip to the emergency room, Playground Maintenance & Safety, and the simple steps in how to reduce both injuries and exposure to legal action at your schools is always an important topic. Like everything else in our lives, the Corona Virus pandemic has introduced additional concerns, causing many to question what the word “safe” really means in allowing children on your playgrounds again.

Consider those 200,000 emergency room visits from playground injuries as it relates to US Covid stats ...

- 33,000,000 total reported Covid cases
- 590,000 total reported Covid related deaths
- 100 total reported Covid related deaths in kids 4-17

While exact data is fluid, the only consensus is kids contract Covid at a drastically lower rate than adults; with kids 12-17 twice as likely to contract Covid as those 5-11 year old grade school kids.

Now consider those 200,000 emergency room visits each year from playground injuries ...

- 15 kids die each year from playground injuries
- 200,000 annual emergency room visits from playground injuries
- 70,000 annual injury reduction as a result of even a basic maintenance program

The bottom line is that a basic maintenance program can prevent up to 33% of playground injuries, and for any of us responsible for maintaining playgrounds, we can play a major role in not only helping keep kids safe, but also significantly reduce costly potential lawsuits.

Back to Covid ... and the protective coatings that are being offered.

First appreciate that as Play & Park Structures is the boutique brand of the largest playground equipment manufacturer in the world, and thus have had a multitude of coatings suppliers knocking on our door over the past year, promoting theirs as the answer to preventing Covid transmissions on playground equipment. Being the biggest means we have the capital, product research, supply chain and manufacturing resources others do not ... and yet we have not seen a coating comprehensive enough to put our name on. Neither has the CDC.

We’ve worked with the CDC over the course of the past year in opening playgrounds safely, and the consensus is that basic cleaning procedures are sufficient in spreading the virus. Here’s the specific CDC statement:

“Outdoor areas generally require routine cleaning and do not require disinfection”

While we continue to research coatings, such as Covid-specific additives to powdercoat paint (making it part of the color membrane rather than a coating over it), the CDC consensus is there is minimal virus transmission risk from contact with surfaces outside. With researchers finding that fresh air disperses and dilutes the virus, and ultra-violet light from the sun should kill anything that’s out in the open, the use of standard cleaning protocols is the best deterrent.



This said, is a regular cleaning schedule part of your overall playground maintenance plan? Regardless of the frequency to do so, scheduled cleaning, along with scheduled inspections, should be foundational elements in your playground maintenance program.

The old adage of “Any plan is better than no plan” rings truer than ever with your maintenance program.



From a liability standpoint, in addition to helping keep kids safe, the first thing an attorney will do is to ask to see your maintenance plan. No plan usually means no defense in a lawsuit. The second thing they’ll do is look at the safety surfacing. If it’s a loose-fill variety such as mulch, a quick glance at the grade line stickers relative to the needed surfacing depth can also be an immediate legal win or lose.

For more typical playground injury and risk examples, the National Playground Safety Institute (NPSI), in conjunction with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), has created The Dirty Dozen of Playground Hazards ... a comprehensive guide to the most notable playground hazards and remedies. Contact us for a free copies for yourself and other stakeholders in your school district.

Regardless of the size of your staff or budget, creating a basic plan is easier than you think, and our local play partners can assist with guides to help create your plan, identify a low and high frequency inspection schedule, and even do a free assessment of your schools playgrounds if you wish.

Regardless if your plan is one page or several, the key words to defending against Covid transmission, preventing playground injuries, or limiting exposure to lawsuits, are “plan” and “scheduled” ... resulting in keeping our kids safe while on the playground ... and out of the emergency room.

For more information on building your playground safety and maintenance plan, or for a free playground inspection by one of our local Play & Park Structures exclusive play partners, please contact us at info@playandpark.com. Thanks for doing your part in keeping our school kids safe!

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