EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

TO: JFK Library Employees and Students

FROM: Trent Lutey, Director of Risk Management

DATE: February 13, 2025

SUBJECT: Update on JFK Air Quality Activities

I wanted to provide you with an update of what Environmental Health and Safety and EWU Facilities Maintenance has been doing since we met on December 10, 2024.

JFK Sampling

Environmental Health & Safety has conducted additional air quality, air particle and tape lift sampling tests. Test results are summarized below and details have been posted to the EH&S website at: https://inside.ewu.edu/ehs/occupational-health-safety/industrial-hygiene/jfk-testing-2/.

Air Quality Sampling

Air sampling tests were conducted in multiple locations in JFK on Dec 13 and Dec 27, 2024.

No significant issues have been identified through air sampling tests. Results from the areas sampled did not find any indications of elevated mold that would indicate a mold/fungus problem. Background debris was low indicating relative clean air. The highest concentration of particles were skin cells and cellulose fibers.

Air Particle Sampling

Additional air particle sampling was conducted on Dec 13, 2024 (Thomas Hammer areas, M04A and M08A) and Dec 27, 2024 (L23, U18, U02C, M04B, M28, M18, M02, M23, and M41).

Particle sampling did not indicate excessive particle loading. Particle counts were on average less than 5,000 particles per 0.1 cubic foot. Outside particle levels were over 120,000 which appears normal. The lower particle counts inside indicates the air handling filtration system is operating as it should, decreasing particles entering the building.

Tape Lift Sampling

Additional tape lift sampling was conducted on Dec 13, 2024 in Thomas Hammer area and room M04C. Tape lift sampling was also conducted on Dec 27, 2024, but results are not yet available.

Tape lift sampling continues to show results with quantities of glass fibers that may cause symptoms including the Thomas Hammer area and room M04C (i.e., greater than 13 glass fibers shorter than 500um per square inch and/or 3 or more glass fibers longer than 500um per square inch).

The origin of the glass fibers is from ceiling tile abrasion that occurs naturally with building and equipment vibration.

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Ceiling Tiles

Because the ceiling tiles in JFK are the origin of the glass fibers, Facilities Maintenance has begun a project to reseat, replace, and/or repaint ceiling tiles.

The following areas have been identified as the priority for the ceiling tile project:

- L23 and adjacent room L21.
- M23 suite to include all offices.
- M04 suite to include all offices.
- M02 Circulation area.
- U02 suite to include all offices and conference room.
- M08A
- Hallways around Thomas Hammer.

This project is currently underway in the JFK entryway and Thomas Hammer areas. The ceiling tiles in Thomas Hammer are also being painted to help reduce particle abrasion. In the area of Thomas Hammer, exposure to glass fibers is also likely higher due to drafts and traffic in the area.

The most damaged ceiling tiles are being replaced one at a time to prevent further glass shedding.

Tiles that are in good condition are being reseated to reduce gaps between the tiles and the ceiling grid which should reduce the particles from above the tiles passing through to the public areas.

The first round of this project should be completed by the end of April.

After the ceiling tile project is completed, we will conduct retesting throughout the library to determine next steps.

Thank you all for your continued support and engagement in this process.

-Trent

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Environmental Health & Safety Service Request: https://inside.ewu.edu/ehs/ehs-service-request/

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