

Northwestern | DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY & SECURITY  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
HEALTH & SAFETY

Building Inspections

## Table of Contents

I. Purpose .....	2
II. Scope.....	2
III. Responsibilities .....	2
IV. Requirements.....	3
V. Recordkeeping .....	4
VI. Regulatory Authority and Related Information .....	4
VII. Contact.....	4
Appendix 1 – Building Inspection Workflow.....	5

## I. Purpose

This program establishes the framework for conducting building safety and health inspections to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and to protect the Northwestern community and its visitors. This is achieved through the systematic identification, documentation, reporting, and correction of potential hazards, including follow-up to verify resolution.

## II. Scope

This program applies to Northwestern-owned locations routinely used by the Northwestern community, including, but not limited to, academic, administrative, residential, athletics, science, library, auditorium, performance, and visual arts facilities. Exterior grounds immediately surrounding these buildings are typically included in inspections. Research spaces (e.g., laboratories) and private residences are generally excluded; however, they may be inspected when warranted or requested.

## III. Responsibilities

### A. Environmental Health and Safety (EHS)

- i. Adhere to the requirements of this program.
- ii. Update this program, as necessary.
- iii. Perform safety and health building inspections to identify corrective actions.
- iv. Coordinate with University stakeholders (e.g., building managers), city, contractors, and others, as necessary, to perform or facilitate inspections.
- v. Document and communicate building inspection corrective actions and reports to applicable parties (e.g., building managers, Residential Services, Facilities).
- vi. Perform follow-up inspections to determine corrective action status, and document and communicate reports to applicable parties.

### B. Schools and Units

- i. Adhere to the requirements of this program.
- ii. Support and facilitate EHS and city inspections, as necessary.
- iii. Take necessary action and provide resources to address corrective actions.

### C. Building Managers, House Directors, and Other Similar Roles

- i. Adhere to the requirements of this program.
- ii. Support and facilitate inspections, as necessary.
- iii. Encouraged to participate in inspections when practical.
- iv. Take necessary action to address corrective actions.
- v. Inform EHS of updates to building managers and building status (e.g., occupancy changes, renovations).

### D. Contractors

- i. Adhere to the requirements of this program.
- ii. Coordinate with the University to perform inspections, including access, documenting findings, and reporting.

## IV. Requirements

### A. Types of Building Inspections

- i. Routine (e.g., annual) EHS inspections.
- ii. Targeted EHS inspections (e.g., unplanned, non-routine, or upon request).
- iii. City inspections facilitated by, or in collaboration with, EHS and applicable schools or units.
- iv. Pre-occupancy inspections following new construction or renovations.

### B. General Procedures

- i. Buildings are routinely inspected by EHS, and whenever additional inspections are warranted (e.g., observed or reported concerns, incident investigations).
- ii. Inspections address multiple health and safety elements, including egress routes and exits, accessibility, housekeeping, fire hazards, lighting, waste management, water damage indicators, signage, and electrical systems.
- iii. Buildings are typically inspected based on priority as determined by building type, occupancy status, and potential hazards.
- iv. Building inspections include, but are not limited to, common areas, stairwells, passageways, mechanical rooms, workshops, storage areas, loading docks, lavatories, janitorial rooms, kitchens, and exteriors.
- v. In residential buildings, sleeping rooms are inspected upon request, when warranted, and during city inspections.
- vi. When corrective actions are identified during inspections:
  - a. Work tasks (WTs) are issued for facilities-related corrective actions (e.g., plumbing, electrical).
  - b. Non-WT corrective actions (e.g., housekeeping, opt-out facilities) are issued to the appropriate parties (e.g., building managers, Residential Services) with an associated due date.
  - c. Notification tags may also be used for damaged or noncompliant equipment, as well as improperly connected electrical appliances (e.g., microwaves, toasters).
  - d. Corrective action reports that include both WT and non-WT corrective actions, as applicable, are communicated to the applicable parties (e.g., building managers, Residential Services, Facilities).
  - e. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-related corrective action reports are submitted to the Northwestern Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance.
- vii. Corrective action follow-up
  - a. Corrective action follow-up inspections typically occur 90 days after issuance, to determine corrective action status.
  - b. Corrective action follow-up reports are communicated to the applicable parties (e.g., building managers, Residential Services, Facilities).
  - c. ADA-related corrective action follow-up reports are submitted to the Northwestern Office of Civil Rights and Title IX Compliance.
- viii. Refer to **Appendix 1 – Building Inspection Workflow** for more information.

## V. Recordkeeping

Northwestern Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) will maintain building inspection records for at least 5 years and maintain a current database of building managers.

## VI. Regulatory Authority and Related Information

Northwestern and contractors will comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) standards and any other applicable codes and standards, including:

- A. [International Code Council \(ICC\)](#)
- B. Local codes and ordinances (e.g., City of Evanston, City of Chicago)
- C. [National Fire Protection Association \(NFPA\)](#)
- D. [OSHA 29 CFR 1910 – General Industry](#)

## VII. Contact

For questions, contact Environmental Health and Safety at [ehs@northwestern.edu](mailto:ehs@northwestern.edu) or (847) 467-6342.

# Appendix 1 – Building Inspection Workflow

