8.5.6 Installation of Fire Suppression Systems

Chapter 8 - Health & Safety	Original Effective Date: November 2003
Section: 8.5 Environmental Health and Safety	Date Last Reviewed: June 2021
Responsible Entity: Vice President for Facilities and Capital Planning	Date Last Revised: June 2021

I. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the safety of all UT Health San Antonio (University) students, faculty, staff, and visitors and to maintain compliance with UT System policy and applicable fire and life safety codes.

II. Scope

This Policy applies to all property, buildings, and facilities owned or controlled by UT Health San Antonio.

III. Policy

A. Campus Standard Installation

The campus standard for fire suppression systems is quick response, ordinary rated, automatic, water-based fire sprinkler systems. Alternative fire suppression systems are currently permitted only in the following areas:

1. Pre-action systems in main electrical vaults and sensitive or high-dollar research areas.
2. Gaseous agent systems in the main telecommunications and networking primary switch rooms.
3. Gaseous agent systems in Computing Resources main computer rooms.
4. Central Energy Plants (CEP) Tank Farms, and Cooling Towers.

Any design alternatives differing from the campus standard installation, must be submitted through the alternative approval process described below. The campus standard does not apply to previously approved or existing installations.

B. Alternative Approval Process

The State Fire Marshal requires the installation of an Automatic Fire Suppression System in all areas of a building for the building to be considered Fire and Life Safety compliant. If an individual occupant, clinician, or researcher has concerns about the installation of a water-based suppression system, the following approval procedure must be followed:

1. Contact the department Director or Chair in writing outlining the nature of concern and the affected University rooms or areas.
2. The departmental Director or Chair must contact their respective Executive Committee member indicating the nature of the concern.
3. A source of funding sufficient to commission an engineering alternative study, remodeling costs, installation costs, commissioning costs, and semi-annual testing/maintenance cost must be identified by the respective department Chair or Executive Committee member.
4. If the Executive Committee member approves the expenditures, the University Fire and Life Safety Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) or Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities Management will commission an engineering study to evaluate the potential installation of the alternative suppression system. The University of Texas System, Office of Capital Projects maintains a checklist that will be used to evaluate the installation of the alternative suppression system. The results will be shared with the Executive Committee member for final approval.

IV. Definitions

When used in this document with initial capital letter(s), the following words have the meaning set forth below unless a different meaning is required by context.

Fire Suppression System – system used to extinguish or control fires, activated by heat, smoke, or a combination of the two.

V. Related References

University of Texas System (UTS) Policy
UTS 135 Fire and Life Safety

Texas Code
Texas Administrative Code Title 28, Section 34.303
Texas Government Code Section 417.008

VI. Review and Approval History

A. The approving authority of this policy is the University Executive Committee.

B. The review frequency cycle is set for three years following the last review date, a time period that is not mandated by regulatory, accreditation, or other authority.

Effective Date	Action Taken	Approved By	Date Approved
11/2003	Policy Origination		
05/2013	Policy Revision		
06/2021	Policy Revision/discretionary edits		