Tri-Campus Heating, Ventilation, and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) Strategy for Return to the University

June 2020

The University of Toronto is committed first and foremost to the health and safety of our entire community.

To ensure a thorough approach to maintaining a safe indoor environment, the role of HVAC systems and current maintenance practices in the context of COVID-19 was assessed against current public health evidence and international industry guidelines.

Public health authorities continue to advise that close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case and touching a contaminated surface and then touching your eyes, mouth or nose are the main routes of transmission.

According to Toronto Public Health:

The virus does not spread through the air, so building residents are not at greater risk from shared vents.
ACTION: Keep distance, especially in common areas.

Supporting the health and safety of our community

The University has implemented a series of measures, in keeping with public health directives, to reduce the risk of transmission, including:

• Reducing the number of people on campus by moving courses online and having only essential workers on-site,
• Implementing physical distancing procedures (> 2 metres) throughout the campus by rearranging schedules and physical layouts,
• Widely communicating COVID-19 precautions and symptoms such as hand hygiene and self-screening posters at all entrances, and
• Advising employees and students to stay home if they are ill and to contact our occupational health nurse if they test positive for COVID-19.

These remain the most effective measures against COVID-19.

To support efforts, building operations teams will continue maintaining a safe indoor environment through:

✓ Regular maintenance of HVAC systems on all of our campuses
✓ Taking extra precautions suggested by industry guidelines to replace centralized HVAC system filters to enhanced MERV 13\(^1\) filters where possible

\(^1\) The Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) scale measures the effectiveness of air filters. Filters with higher MERV values capture a greater percentage of smaller particles from the air that passes through the filters.