Addressing the Fire Prevention Needs of the UT Austin Community
FPS inspectors Stacey Alley and Francisco Gutierrez and FSSS technitian preparing for a fire drill
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OVERVIEW

ABOUT US

The University of Texas at Austin Fire Prevention Services (FPS) office ensures a safe environment for faculty, staff, students and visitors by providing a comprehensive fire prevention program. Our fire safety professionals are charged with monitoring all university buildings for compliance with local and state requirements, and partner with our community stakeholders to perform the inspections and drills necessary for risk reduction and the potential negative repercussions of fire on campus.

As part of our continual effort to improve campus safety and emergency preparedness, FPS serves as the University’s liaison with the Texas State Fire Marshal’s Office and local emergency responders. Our organization ensures that new construction projects comply with applicable codes, as well as to develop compliance solutions for existing structures. We dedicate ourselves to the campus community through a comprehensive program of inspection, prevention, plan review and public education efforts designed to minimize risk and maximize campus fire safety.

Fire Prevention Services is under the Campus Safety office within the Financial and Administrative Services portfolio. Units under this portfolio support and enhance the University’s core mission to be more effective, efficient, and achieve operational excellence.

FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

DARRELL BAZZELL, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

CAMPUS SAFETY

JIMMY JOHNSON, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT

FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES

WAYMON JACKSON, DIRECTOR
PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

PROGRAM AREAS

INSPECTIONS

• Fire Inspections
• Food Truck Inspections
• Dormitory Inspections

PLANS REVIEW

• Design/Construction Drawings
• Specifications
• Alternate Means and Methods
• Fire Department Access
• Shop Drawings

FIRE EXTINGUISHER MAINTENANCE

• Annual Maintenance and Inspections
• Replacing Discharged and Out of Service Fire Extinguishers
• Servicing Fire Extinguishers
• Returning Fire Extinguishers into Service

RESponsible ENGINEER PROGRAM

• Consulting with Stakeholders on Fire and Life Safety Issues
• Liaison with State and Local Authorities

MCD FIRE MARSHAL

• Fire Inspections
• Fire Protection System Inspections, Testing, and Maintenance
• Wildfire Prevention and Response
• Safety Training

SERVICES

TRAINING

• Fire Extinguisher Training
• Crowd Manager Training

FIRE DRILLS

• Coordinating Fire Drills with Building Managers and FSSS
• Monitoring and Evaluating Drills

SPECIAL EVENTS

• Assisting with Event Fire Safety Planning
• Pre-Event Inspections
• Monitoring Events/Fire Watch
• Pyrotechnics Inspection and Monitoring

OUTREACH

• Community Engagement
• Social Media
• Live Demonstrations

LIFE SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS

• Fire Alarm Installations/Upgrades
• Fire Suppression Installations/Upgrades
• Emergency Lighting Installations/Upgrades

WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANNING

• Wildfire Response Plans
• Wildfire Prevention
• Controlled Burns
• Emergency Response
• Landscape Management
I am pleased to present our 2019 Annual Report and to thank you for taking the time to review our many accomplishments and ongoing activities over the past year. The mission of Fire Prevention Services is to make The University of Texas at Austin and its satellite campuses a safe place for students, faculty, staff and visitors to live, be educated, work or visit by reducing the risk of fire and life safety hazards through building inspections, proactive education, plan review and fire and life safety code enforcement.

Fire Prevention Services conducts annual fire/life safety inspections in occupancies within the UT community, initiates numerous training programs, performs plan reviews in new and existing construction, executes due diligence on new real estate purchases and leases, makes assessments and funds replacement of existing fire and life safety system and something new to the portfolio wildland protection planning. We accomplish these tasks with a staff of ten fire professionals consisting of certified fire inspectors and fire protection engineers.

Waymon
WAYMON JACKSON
DIRECTOR,
FIRE PREVENTION SERVICES
ORGANIZATION

JOSHUA LAMBERT
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
ASSISTANT FIRE MARSHAL
• Engineering
• Technical Operations
• Special Projects

ROOSEVELT EASLEY
LEAD INSPECTOR
FIRE INSPECTIONS
• Fire Inspections
• Fire Drills
• Fire Extinguisher Maintenance

Total: 11 employees
FPS embraces diversity in all things that we do; from our approach to fire prevention, to our team members, and how we interact with the university community at large. FPS approaches the fire safety needs of The University of Texas at Austin community through three distinct practices: Enforcement, Engineering, and Education. This approach allows us to improve fire safety at the university by creating good habits, ensuring the construction of a safe built environment, and intervening when issues are discovered. The FPS team comes from a wide variety of backgrounds, bringing with them an array of experience that contributes to a well-rounded perspective on fire safety. Our team members have served in the fire service, multiple branches of the armed forces, municipal and state government, as fire protection contractors, and as consulting engineers in a variety of sectors. We strongly believe that fire safety is a community effort. FPS works closely with stakeholders from across the university community to achieve safety in all aspects of operations at The University of Texas at Austin. We also strive to improve the fire safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors in their lives outside of the University through a wide array of outreach and educational activities including social media, community engagement, training, and large scale fire demonstrations.

We believe the best ideas are born from sharing viewpoints, opinions, and perceptions from colleagues with varied backgrounds and experiences.
MCDONALD OBSERVATORY WILDFIRE MITIGATION

The McDonald Observatory’s remote location, wildfire risks, and unique research facilities pose unique fire prevention challenges that do not exist for main campus and other satellite locations. FPS has initiated a project in conjunction with Project Management and Construction Services, the McDonald Observatory, the Ladybird Johnson Wildflower Center, and the Texas Forest Service to perform extensive wildfire mitigation at the McDonald Observatory. In bringing together this diverse team of experts FPS will be able to meet the unique fire prevention needs of this remote campus location to protect the students, faculty, staff, and visitors at the McDonald Observatory and ensure the continuity of the groundbreaking research that is conducted there.

GAS DETECTION STANDARDS

As new research has begun in the Engineering Education and Research Center (EER), unforeseen safety challenges have arisen. FPS has worked closely with Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) and the Cockrell School of Engineering to update gas detection systems in the building to alert occupants to potential releases of toxic and flammable gasses. These efforts involved the creation of a new campus standard for gas detection systems at the University. A working group comprised of representatives from FPS, EHS, and the School of Engineering collaborated to develop a standard that meets the needs of researchers while providing the highest level of safety for students, faculty, staff, and first responders. These efforts will provide a meaningful impact beyond EER and the School of Engineering by setting the standard for future research facilities throughout the University portfolio.
Fire risks are constantly evolving as new technology emerges and the way we use and interact with our built environment changes. Research activities across the University force FPS to adopt a proactive approach to protect students, faculty, and staff from unconventional fire risks. To meet these challenges FPS staff is continuously learning and developing new skills and actively participates in the development of new national codes and standards in order to stay up to date with the cutting edge of fire protection technologies and best practices. One way that FPS helps keep the University safe in this dynamic environment is by providing unique training experiences to empower the university community to be partners in our mission to protect The University of Texas from fire. Over the coming year FPS will be implementing a range of new web based resources to enhance our educational activities and improve how stakeholders interact with FPS on matters of fire safety. We are also in the process of working with the vendor of our fire inspections software to enhance our inspections activities and expand data collection on fire safety features.
FIRE EXTINGUISHER TRAINING

FPS’ fire extinguisher training program continues to be extremely successful. In 2019, FPS expanded fire extinguisher training to satellite campuses and provided on-site training for students, faculty, and staff at the Marine Science Institute and the McDonald Observatory. Any member of the University community can sign up for these classes on UTLearn. For some individuals, this training is required to be completed on an annual basis. Students learn how to effectively operate portable fire extinguisher and when it is safe to do so. Classes are scheduled for 1-hour sessions and include a 15-20 minute lecture and 30 minutes of hands-on demonstration with FPS’ live fire training prop, where each student gets personal experience and training using an actual fire extinguisher. This program has repeatedly been credited by students for giving them the skills, knowledge, and confidence to effectively use a portable fire extinguisher in actual fire incidents.

CROWD MANAGER TRAINING

In 2019, FPS introduced a crowd manager training program for students, faculty, and staff at The University of Texas at Austin. NFPA 101, the Life Safety Code, requires trained crowd managers for assembly occupancies. In order to meet this need FPS provides free training to the University community to enhance the safety of events and maintain compliance with State Fire Marshal’s Office requirements. In 2019, FPS provided training to 112 individuals over 11 sessions. Our goal is to expand our training capacity for this program and enhance access by implementing an on-line program that can be taken at any time. This will reduce FPS staff workload for providing these trainings and enhance our customer experience by providing students the convenience of taking this required training when and where they please.
The safety of students, faculty, staff, and visitors is the number one priority for The University of Texas at Austin. FPS works to keep the University in compliance with state and federal requirements for fire safety including conformance with fire and building codes and reporting requirements.

FPS engineers perform in-depth reviews to ensure that project plans and specifications conform to the applicable NFPA and ICC codes and standards, The University of Texas at Austin's Design and Construction Standards, and the Texas Accessibility Standard. FPS staff conduct periodic installation inspections and witness tests of fire protection systems to ensure that buildings are constructed in accordance with approved plans and reference standards.

FPS regularly inspects all University facilities to assess and mitigate potential fire and life safety hazards in university facilities. Fire inspections focus on identifying fire safety hazards and deficiencies in buildings to ensure that buildings are well maintained and safely operated. All FPS inspectors are certified by the National Fire Protection Association as Fire Inspector 1, and many have received supplemental training and certifications in specialty areas such a pyrotechnic displays.
FIRE INSPECTIONS

FPS strives to inspect all university facilities at least annually. With over 200 facilities, and over 25 million square feet, on the main campus alone and well over 100 additional buildings spread throughout the state, this is a daunting task. FPS has continued to increase the number of inspections through 2019. With increased stability in inspections staffing and improved inspections software on the horizon this trend is expected to continue. As the University continues to grow and buildings become larger and more complex inspections will become more difficult and time consuming and the skills required to complete fire inspections are expected to expand.

PLAN REVIEW

The number of plan review requests continues to rise with 87 more requests for review in 2019 than the previous year. With the number of projects in for review remaining consistent, these increases are largely driven by the increasing complexity of projects managed by Project Management and Construction Services (PMCS). Accommodating this extra workload continues to strain FPS’ ability to provide reviews that are both timely and thorough. While there have been some procedural changes implemented by the PMCS Technical Review Team, these improvements have not been able to keep pace with the drastic increases in requests for reviews.

25%

2019 continued the projected trend for rapidly expanding construction activities.

161

The number of projects in review remained steady while review requests increased.
CORE VALUE

SERVICE

FPS serves the entire University community by working to create a safe environment for learning, research, cultural enrichment, and entertainment. Whether we are conducting inspections and plan reviews, consulting on fire protection issues, or assisting in the planning and operations of special events FPS works diligently to help our customers achieve their goals while providing for the safety and well being of the University's students, faculty, staff, and visitors. FPS supports construction activities at the university from initial project programming through design and final construction; in addition to ensuring compliance with building and fire codes FPS staff often provides supplemental advice and consultation to project teams to help ensure that their projects are successful and meet the needs of the University. Likewise, for special events FPS is often involved early, assisting with planning, reviewing floorplan and site plans, and evaluating potential hazardous activities. FPS strives to be responsive, collaborative, and thoughtful members of the teams that build and showcase The University of Texas at Austin.
SPECIAL EVENT STAFFING / FIRE WATCH

FPS provides staffing for over 200 special events each year including athletic events, concerts, performing arts events, conferences, and other mass gatherings. This work includes inspections of the venue before and during the event, coordinating fire department response, inspecting vendor areas, supervising pyrotechnics and flame effects, and monitoring crowd conditions. For larger events such as football games and commencement, FPS will also have representatives working in the Emergency Operations Center to help coordinate communications and responses to incidents during the event.

![Bar chart showing Fire Watches / Events from 2015 to 2019]

TESTING AND ACCEPTANCE ACTIVITIES

FPS inspectors witness acceptance testing of fire protection systems for newly constructed buildings and renovations of existing buildings. The decrease in this activity continued through 2019. We expect 2020 to bring a sharp increase in these requests as multiple large construction projects have entered the construction phases. In the future FPS plans to expand our program for acceptance of commercial kitchen hood suppression and exhaust systems. We are also working closely with Capital Projects and Construction to formalize project acceptance criteria and implement a “Certificate of Occupancy” program which may expand the scope and scale of FPS’ involvement of testing and acceptance of building systems.

![Bar chart showing Acceptance Testing from 2015 to 2019]
CORE VALUE
STEWARDBSHIP

We are exceptional caretakers of the resources entrusted to FAS.

FPS strives to utilize university resources in ways that maximize the impact to fire and life safety for the University community. FPS incorporates the maintenance of portable fire extinguishers at Main Campus, the Pickle Research Center, and the McDonald Observatory into our annual inspections of university buildings, saving time and money while reducing the impact of these maintenance activities on building occupants. FPS continuously monitors and assesses life safety systems and features in university buildings and reviews fire inspection reports generated by the State Fire Marshal’s Office and FPS fire inspectors. This information, along with FPS’ database on building fire protection systems, is analyzed to conduct a risk assessment for the purposes of identifying and prioritizing projects for corrective actions. Using this system FPS can ensure that the University’s limited funds are put to the best use to positively impact the safety of students, faculty, and staff.
FIRE EXTINGUISHER MAINTENANCE

Annual maintenance for portable fire extinguishers consists of an in-depth external inspection of the extinguisher and its components. Periodically fire extinguishers will require internal inspection and/or pressure testing. FPS manages a contract with an outside service firm to conduct this work. Extinguishers that are due for internal maintenance are rotated out of service and sent to the contractor for these services. The rotation of extinguishers for internal maintenance and hydrostatic testing can cause fluctuations in the number of fire extinguishers that are serviced each year.

LIFE SAFETY ENHANCEMENTS

With the assistance of Project Management and Construction Services and other university stakeholders FPS completed a number of projects in 2019 to rehabilitate and upgrade existing life safety systems, install new fire suppression and life safety systems, and enhance fire department access across the University:

- JGB - Replace existing fire alarm system and connect to the campus Mass Notification System (MNS).
- JHH - Upgrade existing fire alarm system and connect to the campus MNS
- LTH - Connect existing fire alarm system to the campus MNS
- CPE - Upgrade existing fire alarm system and connect to the campus MNS
- CPC - Install new fire alarm system
- PRC laboratory - Replace existing fire alarm system and connect to the campus MNS, expand existing fire sprinkler system
- LCH - Upgrade existing fire alarm system
- WPR - Upgrade emergency lighting
- BEL - Upgrade emergency lighting
- IC2 - Upgrade emergency lighting
- GSB - Upgrade emergency lighting
- PRC BE1 - Install new fire sprinkler system
- PRC ARL - Install new fire sprinkler system
- PRC Campus - Install emergency key boxes for critical facilities
- Main and PRC Campuses - Install upgraded fire department connection signage
CORE VALUE

TEAMWORK

We work collaboratively across our organizations on common objectives and develop efficient and cost effective systems and processes for campus.

FPS follows a community-oriented approach to fire prevention and partners with departments and individuals throughout the entire University to facilitate the mission of The University of Texas at Austin and ensure the safety of its students, faculty, staff, and guests. Whether conducting inspections, reviewing construction documents, educating and preparing the University community, or working to solve unique challenges with our peers, teamwork is at the heart of how FPS approaches our mission to protect lives and property at The University of Texas at Austin. We strive to collaborate with our partners to find ways to achieve their goals in a safe manner that meets regulatory requirements and fire safety best practices. We all have a role to play in protecting the university from the threat of fire through creating a safer built environment, operating and using facilities in a safe manner, and even practicing fire safety in our homes. FPS is proud to work together to make The University of Texas a safe place to learn and discover.
Beginning in the fall of 2018 FPS has worked closely with several University departments including University Housing and Dining (UHD), the Real Estate Office, Project Management and Construction Services, Information Technology Services, and others in the acquisition and management transition of the high-rise apartment building at 2400 Nueces. Prior to the purchase of the building FPS was part of a large interdisciplinary team from the university that conducted thorough due diligence inspections to assess the condition of the building. FPS continued to work closely with UHD to evaluate the maintenance and operations of the facility during the transition from contract management of the facility to UHD management. FPS has continued to provide guidance to UHD as building improvements are made to the fire alarm system and other building features to better integrate with University operations and enhance the safety of the building’s residents.

**COMMENCEMENT PLANNING AND PREPARATION**

Each spring FPS inspectors and engineers work closely with departments from across the University to plan and prepare for spring commencement ceremonies. During planning site plans and floor plans are evaluated to ensure the safety of graduates and their families, faculty, and staff participating in the celebration. FPS evaluates products, equipment, sequences, and qualifications for pyrotechnics contractors for the signature fireworks show that caps off the festivities. FPS staff closely monitor preparations for the event and inspects seating installations, equipment positions, and fireworks setups to ensure that plans are adhered to. During the event FPS inspectors and engineers monitor facilities where commencement activities are held and FPS leadership is represented in the Emergency Operations Center to assist in coordinating event activities and incident responses. Spring Commencement provides graduates and their families with a special opportunity to celebrate their tremendous achievements, FPS is proud to be an integral partner of the University-wide team that makes these celebrations possible.