



Guidance to Recognize and Support Essential Critical Workers During the COVID-19 Crisis

By Mark Conroy

This guidance is intended to provide information that can be used to help make decisions for maintaining safety equipment in buildings during the reduction in business activities caused by the coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic. It is advisory in nature and is not intended to replace or supersede a federal or local directive.

A functioning building safety infrastructure is critical and imperative during the COVID-19 emergency. The critical infrastructure workers that maintain safety equipment in properties have a special responsibility in these times to maintain a work schedule while at the same time take steps that will ensure their safety. If you work in a job that is essential to the safety of your community, you have a special responsibility to maintain a work schedule that will support the safety and well being of your community, so that persons and property are not exposed to undue risk. The workers that fall into the category of “essential workers” for building and property safety are technicians that maintain the fire and life safety equipment. State and local officials should use their own judgment in applying this guidance to ensure the safety equipment installed in buildings will function when it is most needed (e. g. fire emergencies, power outages, and building evacuations).

An essential building safety equipment worker is one who conducts a range of operations, inspections, tests, and services that are essential to the continued availability and continued functioning of safety and fire protection equipment that is critical for the safety of persons and protection of property. The equipment includes but is not limited to fire sprinklers, fire alarms, fire extinguishers, emergency lighting/exit signs, and backflow preventers. These workers are trained and proficient in testing and maintaining the equipment so that it is operational and works when needed, including during a fire emergency. During this novel coronavirus crisis, workers maintaining the critical infrastructure of buildings, especially hospitals, pharmacies, and grocery stores that remain open under all conditions, should establish and maintain a work schedule that will support the continued operation of vital safety equipment in those buildings.

Brooks will continue to maintain the supply chain to these critical safety equipment workers by delivering new equipment and replacement parts that are critical to supporting the safety infrastructure mandated by law (building and fire codes).

This novel coronavirus crisis had a beginning, we are in the middle and there will be an end. When the end of the crisis becomes apparent, we should be able to look back at our actions and say we made the right decisions. Establishing that fire and life safety equipment technicians are “essential workers” will likely be one of the most important decisions that state and local authorities having jurisdiction will have made and will likely be looked upon as one of the most critically important life safety and property protection measures taken during the COVID-19 crisis.

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