

SUBJECT/TITLE: Above Ceiling and Overhead Work Policy

PURPOSE: To provide a comprehensive means of verifying that above ceiling work within all healthcare and ambulatory healthcare buildings is maintained in accordance with applicable building codes and regulatory standards, as well as related University of Iowa Health Care policies and procedures.

SCOPE: Institutional

DEFINITIONS: Above Ceiling Work: Includes the inspection, repair, and installation of pipes, conduits, ducts, cables, wires, pneumatic tubes, and similar building services that take place above existing ceiling levels. It does not include construction activities that occur before the permanent ceiling is installed in areas being renovated or in buildings under construction. In the latter cases, the above ceiling final inspection addresses the issues covered by this policy.

POLICY:

- A. Installation, repair, and inspection activities performed above the ceiling level within UI Health Care facilities shall comply with the requirements of this policy.
- B. These activities will be performed in compliance with all applicable building codes and regulatory standards and related UI Health Care policies including, but not limited to, procedures identified in this policy.
- C. Specific attention is required to the [Infection Control Risk Assessment \(ICRA\)](#) process for construction, renovation, and maintenance activities with respect to above ceiling work activity in patient care areas and other infection control risk group areas.
- D. Installation, inspection and repair activities will require an Above Ceiling Permit be posted at the work location. The general above ceiling work permit obtained during education shall be posted at all times when above ceiling work occurs.

PROCEDURES:

- A. Policy Requirements
 1. This policy applies to parties performing above ceiling work within UIHC facilities, including UIHC staff and outside contractors.
 2. All above ceiling work permits require an Infection Control Risk Assessment (ICRA).

3. UIHC staff and outside contractors shall review the facilities life safety plans prior to filling out an above ceiling barrier permit if work requires any new penetrations.
1. If it is determined a rated barrier will be penetrated, the person filling out the permit shall indicate location and type of fire stop material/system that will be used to correct any new penetration.
2. Work that does not require new penetrations into rated barriers will not require a full above ceiling barrier permit, only the general above ceiling permit obtained during the certification process. These permits shall be posted.

B. Certification Process

1. Personnel performing above ceiling work within UI Health Care facilities will complete a basic certification course to be eligible to conduct work above ceiling.
2. The certification process consists of the following:
 - a) Applicant Registration
 - b) Review of the Above Ceiling Work Policy
 - c) Above Ceiling Training and Education
 - d) Approval and assignment of Certification Number
3. After review of the referenced online lessons, the individual will be required either to take the hospital onboarding education with Capital Management for badge distribution² or, if the person already has a badge, they will then take an online quiz for certification located at the end of the educational power point. Once they receive a passing score, they will be sent a link to print off their general above ceiling permit. The general permit shall be posted anytime they are performing above ceiling work.
4. Engineering Services maintains a database of all certified personnel who currently have a UI Health Care badge. Individuals who receive a new badge after the date of this policy creation will be tracked by the capital management onboarding process.
 - a) Certification is required for all personnel installing new systems and services, as well as for personnel performing routine visual inspections or conducting investigative and repair related activity.

C. Above Ceiling Barrier Permit: Creating New Penetrations in Rated Barriers

1. An Above Ceiling Barrier Permit shall be completed prior to any new installation work above the ceiling level that will create a new penetration in a rated barrier.
 - a) If the work is part of a designed engineered project, the contractor will be required to display their general above ceiling permit.
2. The individual performing the work is responsible for completing the above ceiling barrier permit. The UI Health Care representative having authority over the work (Engineering Services, Safety and Security, Health Care Information Services, and Capital Management) must receive a digital or hard copy of the permit from the individual who initiated the permit.

- a) If the permit is being filled out by the UI Health Care staff who has authority over the work, then that UIHC staff shall send the permit request to the Engineering Services Life Safety Manager for review.
 - b) If the permit requires infection control mitigation measures, then that permit will be sent to the ICRA Committee for review with a completed infection control risk assessment and approval.
3. The Engineering Services Life Safety Manager will review the permit for completeness and will approve the permit. The UI Health Care Life Safety Manger will then send an approved digital or hard copy to the individual who initiated the Above Ceiling Barrier Permit. The individual will then print out a hard copy of the permit on florescent pink paper, which is to be maintained at the work location in a highly visible location for the duration of the work.
 - a) Failure to display the above ceiling permit at the associated job site will result in a verbal or written warning issued by Engineering Services Life Safety Manager. Any recurring incidents will result in the revocation of above ceiling privileges.
 - b) Failure to obtain an Above Ceiling Work permit will result in immediate work stoppage. It will then be the responsibility of the cited individual, company, or organization to obtain an ACW permit immediately before work can continue. Any recurring incidents will result in the revocation of above ceiling privileges.
 4. The Above Ceiling Barrier Permit can be used for extended projects or until the work associated with the permit is complete. A new permit does not need to be completed each day.
- D. Above Ceiling Work General Permit
1. UI Health Care staff or outside contractors conducting work above ceiling shall post the General ACW permit each time access to the ceiling is required.
 2. Proper infection control shall be maintained for each job location.
 3. Before work starts, above ceiling UI Health Care staff and contractors shall complete an above ceiling inspection before and after work is started and/or completed. Reference section E of this policy.
- E. Prior to beginning Above Ceiling Work (installation, inspection or repair)⁹
1. The individual performing the work conducts an inspection of the area and identifies any pre-existing conditions that are present and in need of corrective action in order for the area to be in compliance with applicable building codes, regulatory standards, and UI Health Care policies.
 2. Any such pre-existing conditions are noted and sent to the Engineering Services Life Safety Manager for follow up and remediation.
 3. Pre-existing conditions of primary interest include the following⁹
 - a) Unsealed penetrations in rated fire and smoke barriers.

- b) Unsealed penetrations in any corridor wall
 - c) Sleeves and conduit stub-outs in corridor walls not smoke sealed (inside of sleeve)
 - d) Open junction boxes
 - e) Temporary wiring
 - f) Temporary/improper supports for conduits, cables, pipes, ducts, trays, etc.
 - g) Broken, damaged or stained ceiling tiles
 - h) Items located on or being support by fire sprinkler piping
4. Any post closeout deficiencies discovered in the area will be repaired and charged to the last UIHC Department and/or outside contractor permitted in that areal

F. Completion of Above Ceiling Work

1. Upon completion of the above ceiling work when creating new penetrations in a rated barrier (both the primary work associated with the permit and any identified pre-existing conditions requiring attention), the individual responsible for the work completes the 'Completion Checklist' and 'Completed by' signature block and date fields on the printed Above Ceiling Work Permit and turns the permit into the UI Health Care Authorization Representative
2. The permit is considered closed out once the "Completion Checklist" and "Completed by" section are filled out and returned to the authorizing party.
3. UI Health Care will conduct follow up inspections of the work on a random and frequent basis to ensure continued compliance to this ACW policy. The 'Final Inspection' signature block and date fields are completed by the UI Health Care Authorizing Representative on the printed Permit.
4. For work that does not involve creating a new penetration in a rated barrier, all above ceiling inspection notes of pre-existing deficiencies shall be sent to the Engineering Services Life Safety Manager via email.

Source Engineering Services
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