Indoor Space Temperature Guidelines

Effective: May 15, 2012

Guideline Statement

The Catholic University of America (CUA) Facilities Operations sets forth targeted interior space temperature ranges for academic, administrative spaces and residence halls.

Reason for Guidelines

These guidelines provide a formalized standard on indoor temperatures to be expected by building occupants depending on the season. It provides CUA Facilities Operations documented guidelines to stand behind in addressing indoor environmental comfort complaints with regard to temperature. These guidelines are consistent with CUA’s peer institutions and with research performed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE). Enforcement of these guidelines will prevent inefficient and wasteful operation of centralized equipment from occurring. Moreover, these guidelines support the University’s educational mission and commitment to environmental stewardship. Energy reduction resulting from these guidelines helps curtail global, social and environmental challenges including the country’s dependency on foreign fossil fuels and reduces the production of greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.

Building Heating and Cooling Indoor Temperature Guidelines

Heating Season

Generally, the heating season is from mid-October to mid-April. Heat will be provided to maintain interior temperatures at approximately 68 degrees Fahrenheit during normal occupied hours. A temperature of 68 degrees Fahrenheit has been researched by ASHRAE (Standard 55-Thermal Comfort Conditions for Human Occupancy) to be comfortable for most people who are dressed appropriately for the season. During unoccupied hours, temperatures may be allowed to drop to 55 degrees Fahrenheit.
Cooling Season

The cooling season is generally from mid-April to mid-October. Cooling is provided to maintain air conditioned facilities at 76 degrees Fahrenheit during normal occupied hours. During off hours, the temperature may rise above this level. As mentioned above, this temperature level is in accordance with ASHRAE Standard 55.

Seasonal Changes

When determining the exact switchover date for each building, Facilities Operations considers prevailing weather patterns, the building's HVAC system, the system controls and building usage. Switchover is approximately a two week process that is not easily reversible. In the spring and autumn, outside temperatures can vary considerably. Consequently, indoor space temperatures might drift from recommended levels.