

PURPOSE:

This policy applies to all new construction and renovations on the NIH campus and in leased space and signifies NIH's commitment to providing facilities and services that are fully operational prior to occupancy in order to provide the environment necessary.

APPLICATION:

The Policy became effective on February 28, 2002, and item 4 (the change Moratorium) was amended on January 21, 2004. Deviations or requests for waivers must be approved by the NIH Space Recommendation Board.

POLICY SUMMARY:

1. A facility is considered ready to occupy when:
 - 100 percent of major/critical systems, including the central support, regional distribution, and special laboratory systems, affecting occupant safety, comfort and ability to accomplish the NIH mission are fully operational.
 - All major/critical systems are certified for use under a variety of scenarios.
 - All major punch list items are complete.
2. Minor balancing and system adjustments may take place following occupancy if:
 - The adjustments do not impact critical elements or services affecting ongoing research.
 - Prior to a scheduled move, occupants are aware of the work proposed for completion after occupancy, including work that will follow final certification.
 - The schedule to complete these items has been agreed upon by all affected parties.
3. When there will be a phased occupancy:
 - Fire protection and life safety systems must be in place prior to occupancy of any area.
 - All elements critical to conducting research in the area to be occupied must be 100% complete. These critical elements must be identified in writing and approved by the IC, which will accept the phased occupancy when they have been completed.
 - Essential modifications that affect the occupant's ability to conduct research must be 100% complete prior to beginning transition into the area unless these modifications fall within the change moratorium period described below.
 - The ORF Project Officer must ensure that all facility systems are supported 24/7 from the time occupancy begins until the facility is accepted by the NIH.
4. To help manage project scope change:
 - A change moratorium period will be established for a period of time starting prior to and ending after the occupancy phase. This period will be defined on a project-by-project basis and will begin prior to occupancy and end one year from the move-in date of the last occupant in the facility.
 - The moratorium period will be defined well in advance of occupancy, in consultation with the IC.
 - Occupants may not make changes to construction during this moratorium unless they have a waiver from the NIH Space Recommendation Board (SRB). The SRB will consider whether the changes will not affect project budget or schedule.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY FOR OCCUPANCY POLICY

A written agreement will go into effect when the PO and the PI/SD/EO of the IC sign off on drawings at the time the design locks. This agreement starts the moratorium period and defines the work that must be completed for the facility to be ready for occupancy.

A written occupancy acceptance agreement takes place when the IC and ORF sign off on completion. Once it is signed, the IC is required to move.

An IC that does not want to move may appeal to the NIH Space Recommendation Board (SRB) and, provided a delay does not affect other projects, may be allowed to make changes while paying double rent.