

An alternate space review checklist

by Peggy Smith, Fred Weiss, CFM, and Carol Farren, CFM

When performing a site analysis as part of evaluating space for an alternate recovery facility, it's helpful to know the characteristics of each site. The following checklist – which has been updated by a team of facilities management experts – can be a good starting point when doing your research prior to conducting a walk-about. Have these items – and any others you can identify – in a handy document you can take with you, and check off each as you address it. Make notes about any issues you uncover during the review, and follow up with the building management company or superintendent.

Building – general

How much space is available in (square feet)?

What is the price per square foot?

What portion of the floor is available?

Is the floor already built out or is it completely empty?

Do you have the floor plan for the space?

What floors are available?

What space is available in the basement, ground floor or areas without windows?

How long is the desired space available?

When is the space available?

What architectural plans are available on the space?

What subletting options are available?

Is the space furnished? What equipment is already in place?

Can we get exclusive use of the space or is it contracted to others?

How far is the building from the current site?

How far is it from the loading dock to the freight elevator?

What provisions are available for moving into the building/space?

What financing options are available for building out the lease space?

Are the floors located above each other?

What other tenants are on the floors where space is available?

Who are they and how long is their lease?

What are the lease term options?

Can we get a copy of the lease?

How can we gain access to the roof?

What problems can we expect when core drilling between floors?

Can we get a copy of the floor plan and office layout?

What are the characteristics of the ceiling in the office space?

How old is the building?

When was building last renovated? If so, when and how?

Is food service available in the building or nearby?

What type of building signage is presently available?

What union-based restrictions must be considered?

What services are available in the building, e.g., cleaning/housekeeping, cafeteria, vending area(s), conference facility, exterminating, reception/lounge, and atrium?

Which of these services is included in the lease?

What escalation clauses are available to include in the lease?

What services are available near the building, e.g., cleaner/tailor, shopping, restaurant, park/pond or recreation, gas station, public transportation, shoe repair?

What major disruptions to building operations have occurred in the past 12 months?

How were they resolved?

Parking

What outside parking is available? How many spaces are available?

Does the building have a multi-floor parking structure?

If so, is it attached to the building?
If the parking is underground or aboveground, how are the floors accessed?
How are doors, elevators accessed, e.g., card key, proximity card?
Are there gates or backup spikes?
Does the parking lot have lights?
Does the lot have security cameras? Motion detectors?
Does the lot have a public address system?
How many entrances are in the parking structure?
How are the entrances secured?
Is the parking area fenced?
Are security patrols in effect?
Are parking spaces reserved? If not, can they be?
What security incidents have occurred in parking facilities in the past 12 months?
What public transportation services are available?
How close is it to the building?

Security

How is the entrance to the property secured?
How is the perimeter of the property secured?
Is there security card access into the building?
Is there security card access on elevators?
Is there security card access into the parking lot and/or deck?
What tenants are in this building?
Is there a security desk in the main lobby of the building?
Is the security desk manned 24x7?
How many security personnel are on staff after normal business hours?
How often do security guards walk the property? How long does this take?
At what times is the security desk not staffed?
What security cameras are in place to monitor building entrances, elevators, roof access, stairwells, lobby areas, and hallways?
What security firm does the landlord use?
What services does this firm provide?
What security breaches have occurred in the past 12 months?

Telecommunications

How is the building connected to external high-speed telecom facilities?
How is the building connected to basic telephone service?
What special telecom services (e.g., SONET) are available?
What telecom carriers currently provide service into this building?
Does the building owner provide telecom services to tenants?
How many entrances are used for bringing telecom services into the building?
If so, from where are the conduits coming?
Is the roof designed to support satellite, microwave or wireless antennas?
How much extra does this cost?
What problems or restrictions exist for installing telecom cabling in building risers?
Can we examine riser areas for telecom cabling?
Where is the telecom cabling riser room located?
Does this room share space with electrical panels or janitor closets?
Do equipment rooms line up directly above each other for ease of between-floor cabling?
How secure are these rooms?
What HVAC is provided to ensure the proper operating environment?
What power is provided to these areas?
Do telecom rooms on each floor share space with other tenants?
What alternate facility entry points are available?
Can the building support voice over IP and/or wireless telecom service?

What bandwidth is available into the building?
When was the last serious disruption to telecom service? How long did it take to fix?

Power

What generator(s) in the building provide(s) backup power for tenants?
What kind of generator is used, its rating, and the type of fuel used?
Is the generator air-cooled or water-cooled?
If the generator is water-cooled, what alternate water sources are available?
How often is this power supply tested?
How many fuel suppliers are available?
How many days fuel supply is available?
What is the landlord's policy on topping up the fuel tanks?
Can a backup generator be installed on the property if needed?
How much power is available on each floor?
How much power is available for individual tenants?
What kinds of additional power can be added if required?
Does the power grid(s) of the proposed facility conflict with other sites?
Do you have a blue print of the power distribution?
Have the building's electrical cables ever been replaced? When? To what extent?
What is the building's history with regard to brownouts and blackouts?
What problems have occurred with interference from high voltage/electromagnetic sources?
How many hours per year do the tenants experience electrical outages in this building?
When was the last serious power outage? What was the impact? How quickly was it fixed?

Cabling Infrastructure

How many telecom cable riser pairs are available from the building demark to each floor?
What kinds of cables are used for risers?
What cabling is already installed to target office locations?
What are the characteristics of the cables?
How can we get a copy of the cabling infrastructure documentation?
What kind of cable routing is available, e.g., conduit, above dropped ceiling?
What kind of voice and data cable can be installed, e.g., plenum (fireproof)?
What was the most recent cabling disruption? How long did it take to fix?
Do they have cable trays and are they accessible?

HVAC

What building HVAC system is in place?
How secure are the HVAC rooms?
What security is provided in areas adjoining the HVAC rooms?
What HVAC management system is used to control the environment?
Is the desired space provided with building air conditioning?
What are the hours of operation for the air conditioning?
Can we install our own A/C in locations where needed? If so, what restrictions exist?
How is air conditioning provided in and throughout the building?
What is the source of make-up cooling water if the supply is contaminated or leaks?
Where are building HVAC systems located?
What facility is available to eliminate smoke and other contaminants?
What backup systems are available to support the HVAC system?
What is the cost for after hours and weekend AC/heat?
How often is the HVAC system serviced?
Where are the thermostats located?
When was this system last tested? What was the result?
How recently has the HVAC system failed?
What was the impact and how quickly was it fixed?

Deliveries

Is there a loading dock available in the building? If so, please describe.
What are the hours of operation for the loading dock?
How is security maintained in the loading dock area?
Do security cameras monitor the loading dock?
How many freight elevators are available?
Are freight elevators self-operated or does a designated elevator operator control them?
What is the size of the freight elevators?
Can freight elevators be reserved? If so, what restrictions exist? What is the cost?
How far is it from the loading dock to the freight elevator?
How many lifts are available?
Can deliveries go through the main lobby at night or on the weekend?

Fire, life and safety

What fire detection and suppression system is provided?
Has there ever been a fire in this building? If so, please explain.
How was the fire contained? What damage was sustained?
What building fire detection/suppression system components available for each tenant?
Where are fire extinguishers placed in the building? How many on a floor?
How often are fire extinguishers tested?
How often are fire drills conducted? Do people evacuate the building?
What arrangements are made with the fire department when conducting drills?
What preparations does the building make for emergency evacuations?
What first aid and emergency medical services are available in the building? Do they have evacuation chairs?
How are emergency exits and fire extinguishers marked? Photoluminescent stairs?
What emergency lighting is provided, and where is it located?
How many people in the building are trained in first aid, EMT, CPR?
What food services are available in the building, e.g., restaurant, snack bar?
How is the water building supply maintained in an emergency? Redundant supply?
What emergency water supplies are available?
Do they have strobes and horns?
Does the building have emergency evacuation maps?
Where are these maps located? Are they on each floor, suite, site, parking area?
What is the procedure for bomb threats?
Where are fireman's panels in the building?
Do elevators go to the lobby in case of an alarm?
How many incidents involving fires have occurred in the past 12 months?
How many incidents involving life safety have occurred in the past 12 months?
How were they resolved?

Data Center Room

What available space can be used for a data center?
Is there a raised floor in the data center room?
What kind of security is provided in the area? Keypad and key?
What are the restrictions, if any, for installing additional security technology?
What kind of power distribution system is installed in this area?
How is this power system configured?
What kind of auxiliary HVAC is provided, other what is provided within the building?
Is this room environmentally controlled separate from the building system?
What alternative power, HVAC, security systems can be installed?
What are the dimensions and square footage of the room?
What office space is available in this area?

How many entrances go into this area?

What disruptions to service have occurred in this area in the past 12 months?

How were they resolved and how long did it take to fix them?

About the authors

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