Annual DGS Fall-Winter Readiness Operations FAQs

The Department of General Services (DGS) performs Fall and Winter readiness operations annually to reduce the likelihood of parks and other resources from deterioration and weather-like damage through winterization in preparation for the colder months.

In anticipation of inclement weather, the Facilities Maintenance Division performs this annual preventative maintenance operation to preserve District-owned facility assets, such as turning off water sources, winterizing pipes, and lines, and adjusting lighting sources. This readiness-operation and its activities begin in October and are completed in mid-December, pending no constraints. Below is an overview of each facility-related program within the seasonal operation.

WATER

How are the water locations prioritized?

The Department of General Services (DGS) services and maintains playgrounds, pool houses, community gardens, all water fountains, including at dog parks at Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) locations. The DGS' and DPR service portfolio consists of 39 community gardens, 11 indoor pools, 12 outdoor pools, 27 spray parks, 12 dog parks, and 55 parks.

The prioritization of water source deactivation and weatherization is based on the water needed for specific Fall activities.

Does DGS have a schedule for turning off water?

- The DGS Facilities Management Team (FMT) began its Water Sources Deactivation process in September with a scheduled completion date before December 15.
- During the second week of September, historically after and schools have opened, or as designated by the Mayor, DGS begins with the disassembling and water turn off to the six (6) outdoor pools not associated with the community gardens. The remaining six (6) outdoor pools, shower rooms (bathhouses), and bathrooms are disassembled, but water is not entirely shut-off due to the buildings supplying water to the gardens and/or water fountains; these are turned off after November 1.

- Beginning November 1 through December 15, community gardens, dog parks, and water fountains are turned off. Locations for turn-off activity are prioritized based on request. For the remainder, plumbing teams are assigned to each ward, and the supervisor creates the schedule.

- DGS will utilize its internal data management system, Salesforce to capture our seasonal water turn-off scheduling and completion process to further improve operational efficiency and productivity.

GRASS

The Spring Season kicks off the mowing season for DGS. In April, DGS commenced its program at schools, recreation centers, municipal buildings, and parks. **Mowing season ends October 31.** Leaf removal services are conducted throughout the Fall season – as deemed necessary. Three leaf-pickup sessions are performed to prepare for winter. Leaf removal continues in November and December.

Will the grass be mowed every 2-3 weeks?

- The frequency of mowing is contingent on the accumulation of rain, the month, and the grass's overall growth. For example, during the months of April and May – weather permitting – mowing is performed weekly. In September, the sessions are conducted biweekly.

How many properties are DGS responsible for mowing?

- DGS is responsible for more than 650 specific locations, including DC Public Schools (DCPS) sites, DPR facilities including parks and triangle parks, and other municipal properties.

Is DGS responsible for mowing public spaces (medians, sidewalks, etc.)

- DGS is not responsible for mowing public spaces such as medians and sidewalks. The Department of Public Works (DPW) and National Park Service provide mowing services for the above areas.

Is DGS responsible for mowing vacant properties and locations?

- Yes. DGS is responsible for vacant government vacant-properties owned by the District in our portfolio. The Department of Public Works (DPW_ and the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) also mow vacant properties within their jurisdiction.

How does DGS prioritize locations?

- DGS considers all District-owned properties that it manages as essential facilities. Locations are scheduled; in certain instances, sites are prioritized based on special events and activities. For example, DPR permitted activities on fields.

Is there a specific order that locations will be mowed?

- DGS schedules services per site by ward.

What happens when it rains? Is there a plan in place to reschedule?

- In the event of inclement weather, DGS coordinates with its contractors to reschedule mowing.

LIGHTS

How many lights or light sources is DGS responsible for maintaining?

- DGS is responsible for maintaining thousands of lights across the city at all District-owned properties. Within these thousands of lights include hundreds of manually (nonautomated) adjustable lights on time clocks, hundreds of lights on timers that can be adjusted remotely, and hundreds of lights with individual photocells that turn on-off based on sunset and daylight.

What role does DGS have in turning on lights at DPR locations?

- DGS schedules the non-automated lighting timers to ensure they are set to be consistent with Daylight Savings Time. Automated timers are adjusted remotely by the DGS-FMT Electrical team.

How do DGS and DPR coordinate turning on lights for DPR locations?

- DPR requests lighting times according to their permitted activities. For DPR locations, the timing for lights can range from sunset to 10 p.m. or later.
- The lighting of play areas is based primarily on location, as there are not many locations that have lighting specifically for playgrounds. Lights are directed toward ball fields, basketball and tennis courts.
- DPR also can program automated sports lighting at many of their fields and courts.

How do DGS and DCPS coordinate turning on lights for DCPS locations?

- The DCPS school determines changes to the lighting timer and light schedule.

What if the lights from the DCPS or DPR facility are “too bright”?

- There are varying types of lighting structures across both DCPS and DPR facilities. Globe lights are considered pathway lights and designed to project outwardly across a pathway or walkway. Light towers are used for fields and courts and project down.

- DGS will assess the location on a case-by-case basis to determine the appropriate course of actions specific to the facility.

How are non-functioning lights prioritized for repair?

- Lighting that impacts public safety is prioritized, followed by DPR and DCPS for activities, according to available funding.

How can residents report DGS properties in need of attention?

- Please report any needed repair or maintenance issues through the following protocol:
    1. Contact your designated facility, Point of Contact (POC). They can decide if a work order ticket needs to be submitted to DGS.
        a. DPR, the Site Manager or Staff on site
        b. DCPS, the Principal or the Director of Logistics
    2. The designated POC can call (202) 576-7676 for assistance.

For more information on annual or seasonal DGS Facility-Related Operations, visit: https://dgs.dc.gov/dgs-facilities-management-division