

April 25, 2012

We're writing to inform you that once daily, controlled blasting activities at the Science & Engineering Hall site are scheduled to begin Thursday, April 26, 2012 (pending weather conditions) and will last for four to six months. Blasting will occur between 10:30 - 11:00 am once per day on most, but not all, weekdays (depending on weather and soil conditions).

Please know that these activities are highly monitored to ensure that they fall within strict regulated limits and will not adversely affect any adjacent structures. You will not need to evacuate buildings during this activity, and this activity should have minimal impact on your schedule – similar to when we successfully completed several months of controlled blasting at the Square 54 for The Avenue in 2008.

Those not in the immediate vicinity to the site may experience sound and vibration similar to that of a door slamming or a large truck passing on the street that will last, at most, a few seconds. However, if you are in a residence hall immediately adjacent to the site at the time of the blast, you may feel more intense brief vibrations likened to a minor earthquake.

Here are a few other key highlights we'd like emphasize:

- For many students, the most noticeable part of this activity will be the series of air horns that sound to notify the worksite and the public of the activity at 15 minutes, five minutes, and one minute prior to the blast, and immediately following the blast to indicate "all clear."
- Since this activity agitates soils, occupants of buildings immediately adjacent the site are advised to keep windows closed during the blasting period
- Also, sidewalks and streets immediately adjacent to the site will be closed temporarily in the few minutes before and during each blasting event at the direction of D.C. Metropolitan Police and with exceptions for emergency vehicles.
- Blasting materials will not be stored on site and, per DC regulations, materials for each day's activities will arrive in the morning via a silent police escort and remain on site until after completion of the day's blasting when the materials will be removed.

We know you may have additional questions so we've included a factsheet that will be posted in the lobby of your building. We will also be sending additional GW InfoMails. Please let us know if you have any questions, concerns, or ideas for how we can better communicate with your fellow hall mates on this topic by emailing [talktogw@gwu.edu](mailto:talktogw@gwu.edu), calling 202-994-1700, or by tweeting @GWDOSHelps.

Sincerely,

Alicia O'Neil Knight  
Senior Associate Vice President of Operations

Peter Konwerski  
Senior Associate Vice President and Dean of Students

## **2012 Controlled Blasting Activities**

Construction activities for the Science and Engineering Hall will include controlled blasting activities, which will begin in late April and will occur once daily on weekdays (usually in the 10:30-11:00 am timeframe) for a period of several months.

### **8 things you should know about controlled blasting**

- **What is controlled blasting?** Rock formations lie below parts of the Science and Engineering Hall development site and will need to be removed. This type of work is common for construction of new buildings and occurs regularly in the District of Columbia. Both The Avenue (just north of this site) and the Institute for Peace building at 23rd Street and Constitution Avenue, NW are examples of blasting that has occurred recently near GW.
- **What can I expect to hear/see/feel?** The most noticeable impact is typically the air horn safety signals sounded 15 minutes, five minutes, and one minute before the blast and at the conclusion of the blast. Those very near to the construction site may also feel a vibration that will be comparable to that of a door slam or a large truck driving down the street. The blasting area will be covered with rubber mats to minimize debris. The suddenness of an unexpected blast may make the vibrations seem more severe. Also, weather conditions (such as high humidity or the presence of a cloud cover) can cause the air movement from a blast to seem more severe.
- **Is blasting safe?** Yes. Vibrations and sound generated will be well below the government regulatory limits. Blast vibrations will be controlled and will not affect the integrity of adjacent structures, either above or below ground. Seismographs will measure ground motion and noise to confirm it is within established limits. All work is being coordinated with applicable government agencies, including Metro, D.C. utilities, local/federal police forces, and the surrounding medical and residential facilities.
- **Will sidewalks or streets be closed during the activity?** Adjacent sidewalks and roads may be closed for brief periods before or after a blast, depending on the specific location of that day's activity.
- **How is the blasting performed?** Holes are drilled and materials are inserted into the bedrock that will create a blast when activated that loosens rock so it is more readily excavated.
- **What should I do to prepare?** Residents living adjacent the project site should keep windows closed for the brief period of the blasting, between the one-minute signal and the following all-clear signal. If you are near the construction site and hear an air horn, please be aware that blasting activity will occur shortly and follow instructions of site personnel and any additional signage that may be posted.
- **When will controlled blasting begin/end?** Once daily blasting will begin on Thursday, April 26, 2012 and last for a period of four to six months depending on the extent of rock on site and other conditions.
- **How do I get more information?** To view a video of controlled blasting that took place in 2008 during construction of The Avenue (immediately north of the SEH site on the location of the former GW Hospital), visit GW's campus development website at [www.neighborhood.gwu.edu/cd/](http://www.neighborhood.gwu.edu/cd/). Please email [talktogw@gwu.edu](mailto:talktogw@gwu.edu) or tweet @GWDOSHelps if you have additional questions or concerns or for more information on campus development issues.