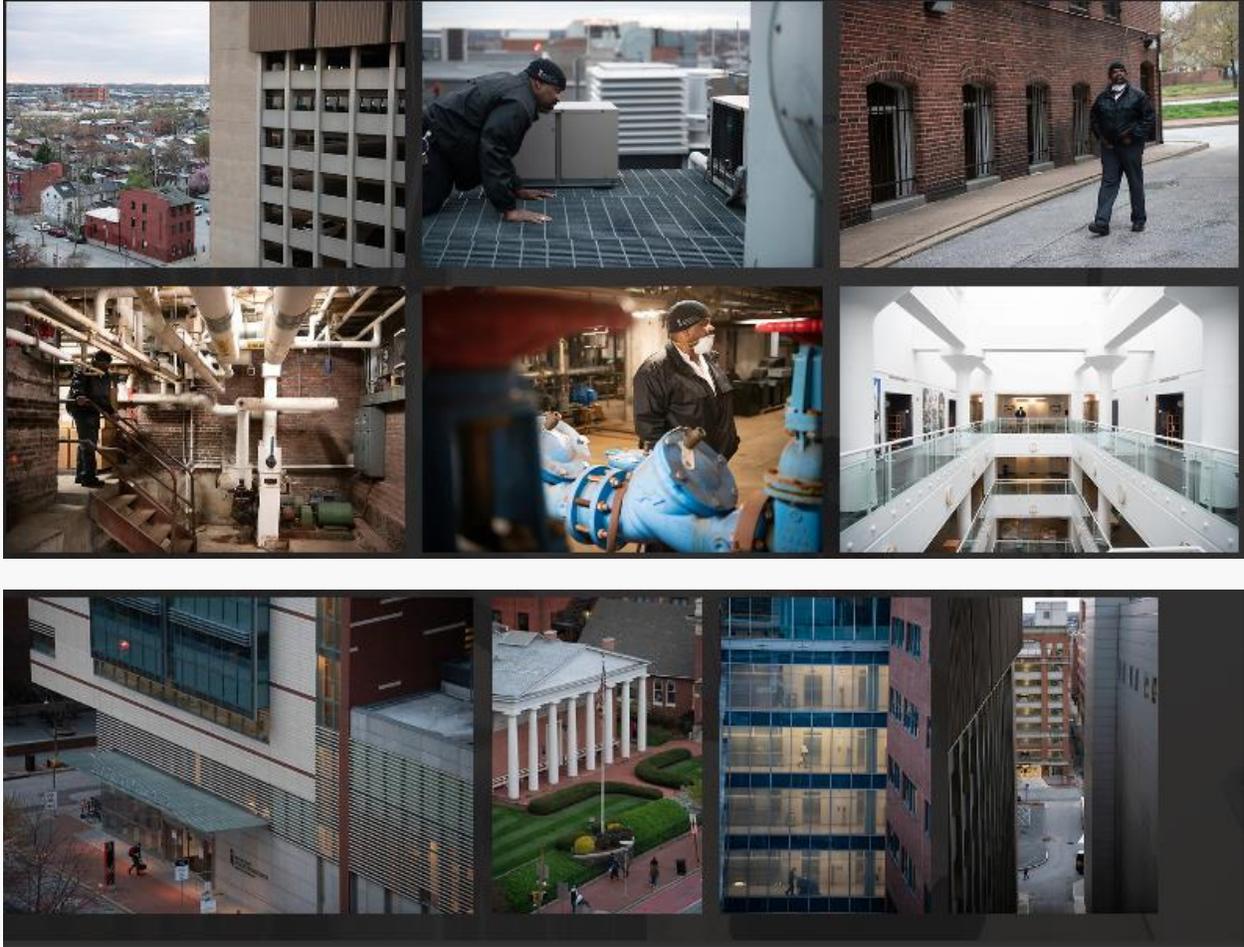


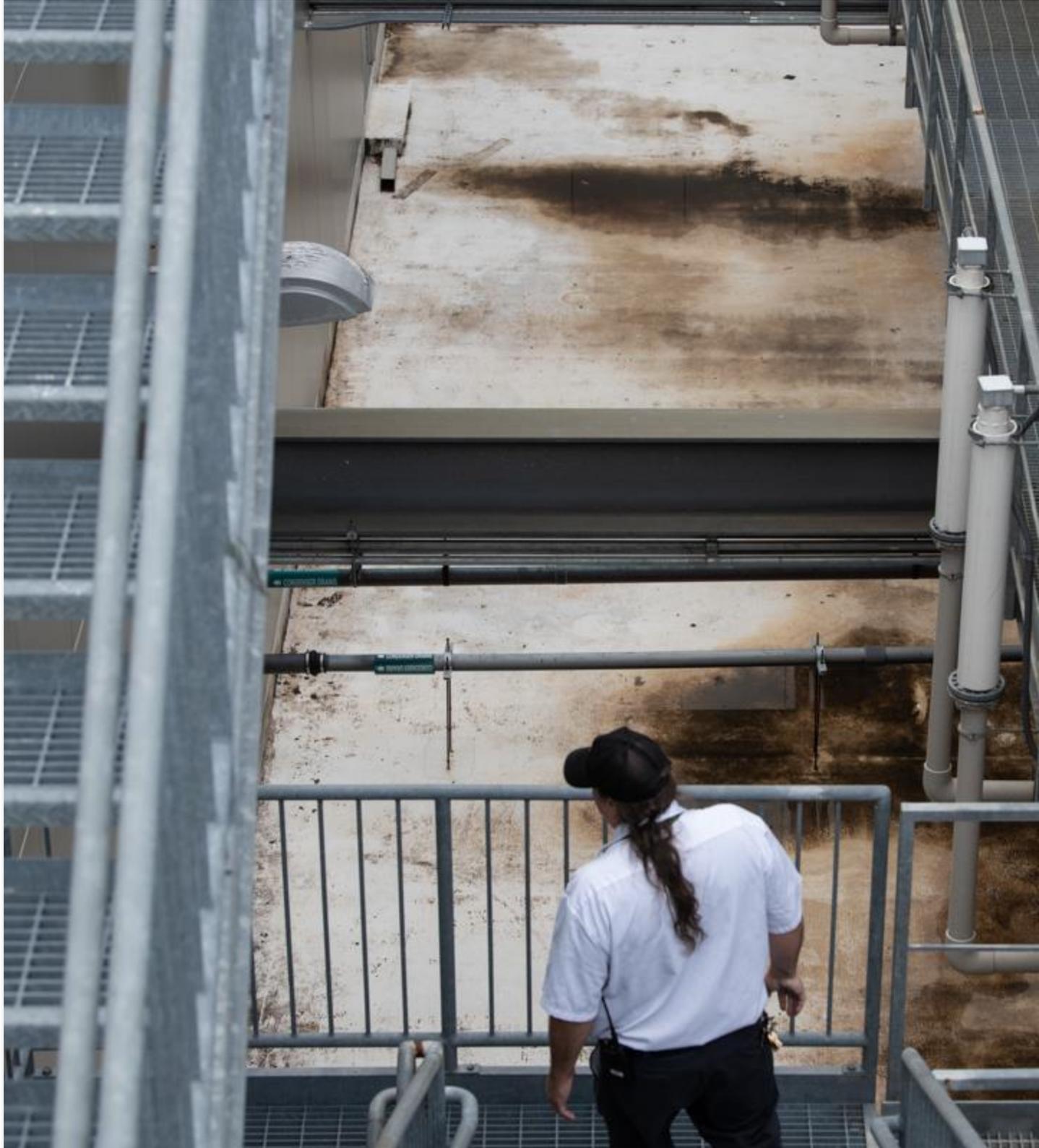
Essential Services Continue to Be Performed on Campus

May 18, 2020 / By [Matthew D'Agostino](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life and lives in many ways for millions of people around the world. But March 16, 2020, rocked the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) in a very specific way. It was a day many UMB employees will likely never forget: Day One of teleworking due to the coronavirus sweeping the country. As the threat of infection was predicted to skyrocket, the majority of the 7,600-plus employees from the vibrant public health, law, and human services university in downtown Baltimore had packed up their desks the previous Friday, ready to embark on their new remote adventure.

But that wasn't the case for everyone.





Joe Pfeiffer checks the cooling towers on top of the Pharmacy North Building.

On that chilly spring morning, highlighted by faint pink and yellow spring blossoms and billowing cumulus clouds, countless employees drove along virtually deserted roads to campus. About 250 UMB employees — all deemed “essential” — found themselves trekking back through the web of city streets to reach their regular Monday morning destination. Because for some, their presence was required to “hold down the fort,” as the saying goes. “Essential” suddenly became a word in everyone’s daily “coronavirus vocabulary.”

While others holed up at home in sophisticated offices or makeshift studies, essential employees returned to campus knowing their mission was to continue to keep buildings functional, streets safe, garages operational, elevators working, plumbing operational ... the list goes on. And with this responsibility came the threat of contracting the sometimes deadly virus — a fear consistently at the forefront of their and their families’ minds.

This photo essay tells one such story and gives visual meaning and emotion to what many of us do not see from the safety of our homes. Joe Pfeiffer and Howard Hamlin work the second shift with Facilities, from midafternoon to midnight.