

Addressing Indoor Air Quality Issues

Modern buildings are designed as enclosed air spaces with centralized air handling, distribution, and filtration systems to keep pollutants out. However, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that indoor environments, where approximately 90% of Americans spend their time, can be more polluted than outdoor environments.

What are factors that can affect Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)?

- **Chemical:** combustion sources (gas and kerosene heaters), off-gassing of building materials and furnishings, cleaning and disinfecting products, and personal care products.
- **Biological:** mold, bacteria, viruses, pollen, dust mites, and animal dander.
- **Other factors:** odors (damp, musty, sewer-like, rotten, fragrant), temperature, humidity, air movement (drafty or stuffy), carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, or dust.

What are possible health effects?

- Short-term: irritation to eyes, nose, and throat, headaches, fatigue, hypersensitivity, and allergies.
- Long-term (due to repeated exposures): respiratory and heart diseases.

How can you address an IAQ concern in area your area

- Locate or identify the source of the concern.
- Keep track of when you experience symptoms (e.g., aches, pains, headaches, etc.) and they go away.
- Immediately convey your concerns to your supervisor who, in turn, contact Facilities Management for an initial evaluation.
- If you feel that you have symptoms related to indoor air quality, report those to Employee Health Services.

EHRHS's Role

- Identify the source(s) of concerns.
- Collaborate with other groups (e.g., Facilities Management, Housekeeping, Employee Health Services) to mitigate or remediate the IAQ concerns and ensure that the building is operating under acceptable standards.

Quick Take

- Immediately report IAQ concerns to your supervisor.
- Immediately report symptoms related to IAQ to Employee Health Services.
- Be mindful of products that may affect your air quality.

