

OCCUPANT INFORMATION SHEET ON INDOOR AIR QUALITY

We spend up to 90 percent of our time indoors. The quality of indoor air has an impact on our health, comfort, well being, and productivity. While most buildings do not have severe indoor air quality problems, even well run buildings with good ventilation systems can experience episodes of poor air quality. Occupants can have a positive influence on the indoor environment by practicing the following:

Building Occupants— Influence Your IAQ

1. Do not water indoor plants more than once a week, and do not allow water to accumulate in the bottom of the pot. Excess moisture contributes to mold and mildew growth and attracts pests.
2. If there are floor drains or infrequently used sinks, pour water down the drains periodically. Mineral oil (not vegetable oil) can be added to the water to create a sealant that will prevent the water from evaporating too quickly. When a drain is not used for a while, the liquid in the trap may evaporate, allowing sewer gases to rise through the plumbing.
3. Keep your work area clean and neat by minimizing paper accumulation and by washing cups and utensils. Remove food crumbs and avoid storage of perishable food (i.e., oranges in a desk drawer) that may attract pests or cause odors.
4. Store food properly. Remove old food containers and perishable items from the refrigerator periodically.
5. Wipe down your desk, phone receiver, and key pads periodically. Spray Lysol to disinfect items that you commonly use, especially phone receivers that may be used by several persons.
6. Check areas where water may intrude (i.e., water cooler, refrigerator, plants, coffee maker, windows, ceiling tiles) and look for stain marks. Make sure that those areas are cleaned as soon as possible.
7. Report water leaks and floods to your facility management department.
8. Clean out the water collection container of your water cooler. Using diluted bleach solution (1 part bleach to 10 parts water) will help minimize mold growth.
9. Ensure that all appliances including the Xerox machine, computer, and printer are in good condition.
10. If odiferous products are used, make sure that there is adequate

- ventilation. Avoid using products that contain volatile organic compounds; substitute water-based products for them.
11. Do not smoke indoors, and avoid smoking near the building ventilation intakes or doorways.
 12. Use perfume or cologne sparingly.
 13. Do not block air vents or grills with equipment, furniture, decorations, or other materials. Keep supply vents and return-air grilles unblocked, so you won't unbalance the HVAC system or affect the ventilation of a neighboring office.
 14. Make sure that the carpet is vacuumed and cleaned periodically.
 15. Do not allow dust to collect. Periodically wet-wipe or vacuum surfaces to minimize dust accumulation.
 16. Make sure that garbage containers are emptied daily to prevent odors and biological contamination.
 17. Wash your hands frequently with soap and water to curtail the spread of colds, flu, and other infectious illnesses. Don't come to work during the infectious phase of a cold or flu.

Factors that Affect Occupant Comfort and Productivity

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, a number of environmental and personal factors affect how people perceive air quality. Below are some common ones:

- Odors
- Temperature—too hot or cold,
- Air velocity and movement— too drafty or stuffy
- Heat or glare from sunlight
- Glare from ceiling lights, especially on monitor screens
- Furniture crowding
- Stress in the workplace or home
- Comfort with the physical aspects of the workplace: location, work environment, availability of natural light, and the aesthetics of office design
- Work space ergonomics, including the height and location of the computer and the availability of adjustable keyboards and chairs
- Noise and vibration levels
- Selection and location of office equipment

Occupants should consult their supervisor or office manager if there are any concerns about these factors.