

Background Information for Administrative Staff Checklist

Instructions

Read this section before completing the Administrative Staff Checklist.

GENERAL CLEANLINESS

Regular and thorough cleaning helps to ensure good indoor air quality (IAQ). While custodians typically clean the offices, administrative staff also play an important role in promoting and maintaining cleanliness in their areas. The presence of dirt, moisture, and warmth stimulates the growth of molds and other biological contaminants. Unsanitary conditions attract insects and vermin, leading to possible IAQ problems from animal or insect allergens. Excessive or improper use of pesticides for secondary control of insects, vermin, and head lice can also cause IAQ problems.

EXCESS MOISTURE

Excess moisture contributes to mold growth. Mold can trigger allergic reactions and asthma in sensitive individuals. Mold can also cause odors and other IAQ problems. Excess moisture is the result of condensation on cold surfaces, leaking or spilled liquid, or excess humidity. Note any signs of present or recurrent moisture.

Monitor for condensate (condensed water or "fog") on cold surfaces.

Check for leaks or signs of moisture from plumbing or roofs.

Clean spills promptly.

- For large spills on carpets, contact custodial staff immediately. (Clean and dry carpets within 24 hours to prevent mold growth.)
- If liquid leaks from the ventilator, request that custodians clean the unit ventilator and replace the filter.
- Report previous spills on carpets or in unit ventilators, since they can affect current IAQ.

THERMAL COMFORT

Temperature and relative humidity can affect comfort and IAQ. Changing thermostat settings or opening windows to control temporary fluctuations in temperature can not only worsen comfort problems but also have an adverse effect in other areas of the school. Comfort for all occupants is a worthy objective, but because people have different levels of comfort, a more practical goal is assuring that 80 percent of the occupants are comfortable.

VENTILATION

Ventilation is the process by which air is circulated throughout the school and your office. Stale indoor air is exhausted to the outside, and outdoor air is drawn into the building. Schools may either have mechanical ventilation (supplied by fans) or natural ventilation (i.e., operable windows). Improperly-operated or poorly-maintained ventilation systems can cause serious IAQ problems. In addition, the ventilation system can carry air pollutants from one location in the school to another.

Use the HVAC diagrams in the *IAQ Background* to determine your office's ventilation method. If you have mechanical ventilation, confirm that air is flowing into the room from the air supply vent(s). Check for airflow by holding a piece of tissue paper near the air supply vent(s); if air is flowing, the tissue will flutter away from the supply vent. Don't obstruct the airflow with books, papers, furniture, or other obstacles. Never place anything on top of unit ventilators.

If you have mechanical ventilation, confirm that air is flowing from the room into the air return grille(s). Check for airflow at air return grille(s) in the same manner as above. If air is flowing, the plastic or tissue will be pulled toward the return. In addition, a piece of plastic that nearly covers the grille will stick to the

face of the grille if air is flowing properly. Again, don't obstruct airflow with books, papers, furniture, or other obstacles.

Check for unexplained odors. Improperly operated or poorly maintained ventilation systems may cause IAQ problems. Odors, or the need to use scented air fresheners, may indicate a ventilation problem. Remember, the ventilation system can carry air contaminants from another location in the school to your office. In addition, maintenance vehicles or buses should never idle near the outside air intake vents. If your school or state has anti-idling policies in place, locate and review these. If not, consider creating such a policy (refer to **Appendix B** of the *IAQ Coordinator's Guide*).

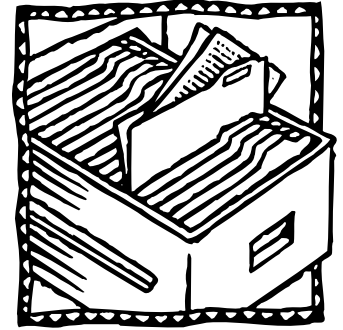
LOCAL EXHAUST FANS

Use local exhaust fans to prevent air pollutants and moisture from accumulating in, or spreading beyond, the local office area or room. Local exhaust fans can be linked to one particular piece of equipment (such as a duplicator) or used to treat an entire room (such as a smoking room or custodial closet).

Determine if your office activities generate air pollutants and whether the room or area is equipped with local exhaust fans. Typical office activities that generate air pollutants include smoking, operation of office equipment, and food preparation. If there are no activities that generate air pollutants, you do not need a local exhaust fan. Local exhaust fans should be considered, however, for the school nurse's office to help prevent germs from spreading throughout the school.

Confirm that local exhaust fans function properly.

Check for airflow when fans are turned on. (Hold a piece of tissue paper near the fan—or within the space of the fume hood—to see whether it is pulled away from the room). Train the administrative staff or people who use the office equipment on when and how to use the fans. Conduct pollutant-generating activities with the exhaust fan turned on and monitor the fan's use throughout the year.



Confirm that fans are used whenever activities that generate pollutants take place.

PRINTING/DUPLICATING EQUIPMENT

Printing and duplicating equipment can generate indoor air pollutants. Spirit duplicating machines and diazo dyeline (blueprint) machines present particular IAQ problems due to the presence of methyl alcohol and ammonia, respectively. Other types of equipment may include photocopiers, mimeograph machines, electronic stencil makers, and computer (laser) printers. Again, local exhaust and ventilation is important.

Confirm that the equipment functions properly and is regularly maintained.

Minimize staff and student exposure to equipment processes.