

## Indoor Air Quality and Your Business

Indoor air quality (IAQ) is a growing concern for many companies. Whether you're a business owner or building owner, you should take potential IAQ problems seriously. If left uncorrected, air quality problems could affect your workers, resulting in lost productivity, increased absenteeism, and decreased morale. In addition, you should be aware that if a serious problem arises, employees might turn to litigation.

Even New Buildings Can Be at Risk

The major causes of unhealthy indoor air include the following: 1) poorly designed, operated, and maintained air conditioning and ventilation systems; 2) unintended or poorly-planned use of buildings; and 3) air pollutants that may arise from building materials, pressed wood products, furnishings, cleaning supplies, paints, adhesives, copy machines, photography and print shop chemicals, and pesticides. As such, even clean, attractive, new, or remodeled buildings can still be at risk.

With the pervasive potential for poor air quality, what can you do to make your workplace environment safe? Here are some steps you can take:

- Keep a record of all reported health complaints.
- Be alert for clusters of similar health problems. Contact your state or local health authorities to discuss the symptoms and possible causes.
- For help in identifying, correcting, and preventing IAQ problems, visit the EPA's website, [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov). There you can also obtain free, printable copies of Building Air Quality: A Guide for Building Owners and Facility Managers and Building Air Quality Action Plan.
- For a health hazard evaluation, contact the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) at [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh).
- If you hire a professional company to conduct a building investigation, make sure they have experience identifying and solving air quality problems in situations similar to yours.

By meeting IAQ problems head-on, you'll be taking action that will not only help control potential health hazards, but will also contribute to a safer and more productive work environment.