

TITLE:

GUIDELINES FOR REPORTING INDOOR AIR QUALITY CONCERNS

1.0 Introduction

Indoor air quality (IAQ) involves the content of indoor air that could affect the health and comfort of building occupants. IAQ is influenced by a variety of factors, the most common being:

- Temperature and humidity;
- Insufficient outside air being introduced into the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) system;
- Insufficient circulation of air; and
- Odors from outside sources being introduced into the system.

A typical IAQ investigation consists of building occupants completing the IAQ questionnaire, the Environmental Health and Safety Office (EHSO) interviewing building occupants, and EHSO and/or Campus Services conducting a building survey. These steps assist EHSO in determining an appropriate remediation strategy.

Investigation and remediation of IAQ concerns is a joint effort between Campus Services, EHSO, and the person(s) reporting the problem. Most IAQ problems or complaints can be remedied quickly. However, complex situations (e.g., large areas of fungal growth, multiple causative agents, etc.), may take more time to reach a resolution. In each case, EHSO and Campus Services make it a point to keep building occupants informed of progress in addressing the situation.

2.0 How to Minimize IAQ Problems

You can help minimize IAQ problems in your work area by observing the following:

- Do not block or shut vents or building returns.
- Do not block thermostats with equipment.
- Observe the University's NO SMOKING Policy, which prohibits smoking inside of buildings and within 20 feet of any building opening/entrance.
- Dispose of food waste in receptacles that are emptied daily.
- Do not over water plants and do not allow mold growth to occur in the dirt.
- Clean up water spills promptly.
- Report water intrusion and sewage problems IMMEDIATELY to Campus Services at (404) 727-7463.
- Avoid concentrating electronic office equipment within small, unventilated areas.
- Do not burn candles or have other scent-producing materials in the work area.

3.0 How to Conduct a Survey of the Area

If you have indoor air quality concerns, an important step you can take is to identify potential sources of your concern by conducting a basic survey. Survey your area for chemicals stored in open containers (i.e., cleaners, paints, etc.), mold growth, odors caused by outside activities (e.g., cigarette smoke, construction activities, engine exhausts, garbage, etc.), or anything that likely could be the cause of your IAQ concern. It is helpful to keep a log about the nature of the problem and the surrounding conditions, describing any pattern or other aspects that will help uncover the cause of the IAQ problem. The log will be used to focus on the most likely causes of the problem and could expedite a solution.

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4.0 Who to Contact

If you have an IAQ complaint, contact Campus Services at (404)727-7463 and report the problem. If Campus Services is unable to identify and resolve the problem, either Campus Services or complainant should contact EHSO at (404) 727-5922. All affected building occupants should complete an IAQ Questionnaire. Once you complete the questionnaire, email or fax it to the EHSO representative indicated on the form.

5.0 Events Requiring Immediate Reporting

5.1 Water Intrusion

IMMEDIATELY report such an event to Campus Services at (404) 727-7463. Include, to the extent known, the following information:

- Source and approximate quantity of water,
- Affected areas,
- Water-damaged materials, and
- Whether or not the source has been controlled.

Even clean water left for more than 24 hours can lead to mold growth.

5.2 Sewage Backflows

Events involving sewage backflows are very serious. Report the problem IMMEDIATELY to Campus Services and do not attempt to clean or remove affected materials. Campus Services will manage the response.