

FACT SHEET



Connecticut Department of Public Health
Environmental Health Section
Environmental & Occupational Health Assessment Program
410 Capitol Avenue MS # 11EOH, PO Box 340308
Hartford, CT 06134-0308
Telephone: (860) 509-7740 Fax: (860) 509-7785
<http://www.dph.state.ct.us>

Indoor Environmental Quality



What is indoor environmental quality (IEQ)?

The character of the air and environment that contribute to the health and comfort of occupants inside buildings - homes, schools & workplaces. The air and environment can be influenced by chemical, biological, and physical agents that may come from occupant activities, building materials or the ambient environment.

Why is IEQ important?

- Inside air can be many times more polluted than the outside air.
- People spend 90% of their time inside.
- IEQ problems can impact health - asthma and other respiratory diseases, eye and nose irritation, headaches, dizziness, fatigue.

Why now?

- Energy conservation concerns have led to tighter building construction and reduced levels of outside air brought inside.
- New building materials, such as glues and particle board, can irritate some people.
- People are more aware of their environment.

What are some things that can affect the quality of the indoor environment?

- ♦ Temperature
- ♦ Dust/dirt
- ♦ Mold
- ♦ Moisture
- ♦ Ventilation
- ♦ Allergens:
 - pollen
 - animal dander
- ♦ Insects, rodents
- ♦ Carbon monoxide (CO)
- ♦ Bacteria/viruses
- ♦ Chemicals:
 - mercury
 - formaldehyde
 - household cleaners
 - pesticides

What are some indicators of indoor environment problems?

- ◆ Noticeable odors
- ◆ Visible water damage
- ◆ Excessive humidity
- ◆ Visible mold & mildew
- ◆ Visible dust/dirt
- ◆ Damaged flue pipes or chimney
- ◆ Feel better when outside of home
- ◆ Dirty/faulty heating or air conditioning equipment
- ◆ Stale or stuffy air

What can I do to improve my indoor environment?

- Use “green” cleaning products.
- Install a carbon monoxide detector.
- Change furnace filters regularly; have furnace serviced annually.
- Use exhaust fans in bathroom and kitchen.
- Buy furniture, carpets, paints that are low odor emitting.
- Fix all water leaks promptly.
- Vacuum using a HEPA filter; dust frequently.
- Keep all food and garbage in covered containers.
- Store products such as paints, gasoline, motor oil, and pesticides in air tight cabinets, an outside shed, or an unattached garage.
- Discard old/unused chemicals & pesticides properly.
- Air out dry cleaned clothes before bringing them inside.



Where do I get more information?

- Connecticut Department of Public Health
Environmental and Occupational Health Assessment Program
Indoor Environmental Quality Unit
860-509-7740
www.dph.state.ct.us
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
www.epa.gov/iaq
- Healthy Indoor Air American Homes
www.montana.edu/wwwcxair
- National Center for Healthy Housing
www.centerforhealthyhousing.org
- U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA)
www.osha.gov/SLTC/indoorairquality/index.html
- Healthy Schools Network, Inc.
www.healthyschools.org