

ADMINISTRATORS AND SCHOOL BOARDS

Your Role on the Indoor Air Quality Team

Indoor Air Quality



Tools for Schools

"In our part of the country, everybody understands mold. Staying proactive on IAQ issues not only helps our students achieve, it also helps us avoid unnecessary distractions, liability headaches, and public relations worries. By involving parents and the community in IAQ prevention, we have avoided confrontations over minor problems and stayed focused on the classroom."

— Don Kusssmaul, retired Superintendent of East Dubuque Community Unit School District #119, Illinois

A Healthy Indoor Environment is Essential for Your School(s)

Your staff and students deserve a healthy indoor environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. However, indoor levels of air pollutants may be 2-5 times higher, and occasionally 100 times higher, than outdoor levels. Poor indoor air quality (IAQ) can cause headaches, fatigue, sinus congestion, coughing, and sneezing; it can promote the spread of airborne infectious diseases. Indoor pollutants can be particularly harmful to students with allergies or asthma. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism due to chronic illness, accounting for 14.7 million missed schools days each year.

Failing to address poor IAQ can...

- Result in an unfavorable learning environment for students, reduce the performance and effectiveness of teachers and staff, and increase absenteeism.
- Generate negative publicity that can damage the school's and administration's image and effectiveness.
- Strain relationships among parents, teachers, and the school administration.
- Create liability problems.
- Accelerate the deterioration and reduce the efficiency of the school's physical plant and equipment.

It costs less to correct or prevent potential IAQ problems than to fix them after they become more serious.

U.S. EPA's IAQ Tools for Schools Kit Provides Guidance

The *IAQ Tools for Schools* Kit provides common-sense guidance to help your school prevent and solve most IAQ problems with little cost and minimal effort from school staff. The highest levels of school administration must, however, be committed to indoor air quality and take the lead. This starts with identifying and empowering an IAQ Coordinator in each school or at the district level—often the facilities manager, principal, or vice principal—to organize your school's IAQ efforts.

Empower and be part of your school's IAQ Team. Draw on your contacts in the community to identify local business and community sponsors for your school's IAQ campaign. Communicate IAQ activities to the community.

**USE THE ENCLOSED CARD TO ORDER THE *INDOOR AIR QUALITY TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS* KIT TODAY
VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT www.epa.gov/iaq/schools**

INDOOR AIR QUALITY IN SCHOOLS

Maintaining good indoor air quality in your school means:

- Controlling airborne pollutants
- Bringing in and distributing adequate outside air
- Controlling moisture and mold
- Maintaining acceptable temperature and humidity

Sources of pollutants in and around schools:

INDOOR SOURCES

- Radon
- Classroom pets
- Excess moisture and mold
- Dry-erase markers and similar pens
- Dust and chalk
- Cleaning materials
- Personal care products
- Odors and volatile organic compounds from paint, caulk, adhesives
- Insects and other pests
- Odors from trash
- Students and staff with communicable diseases

Potential high-pollution areas

- Science laboratories
- Vocational arts areas
- Copy/print areas
- Smoking lounges
- Food preparation areas

OUTDOOR SOURCES

- Pollen, dust, and fungal spores carried inside on shoes and clothing
- Vehicle emissions or unsanitary debris near building air intakes
- Pesticides used on school grounds
- Dumpster odors
- Leakage from underground storage tanks

The Issues

Indoor levels of air pollutants can be 2-5 times higher, and occasionally 100 times higher, than outdoor levels. Nearly 56 million people, approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population, spend their days inside elementary and secondary schools. In 1999, the National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education reported that approximately 25 percent of public schools described unsatisfactory ventilation, while 20 percent of schools told of unsatisfactory IAQ. IAQ problems can cause discomfort and contribute to short- and long-term health problems for students and staff.

The Solution

IAQ problems can be much less expensive and time-consuming to prevent than fix. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's *IAQ Tools for Schools Kit* provides you with resources and checklists to help evaluate your school's indoor air quality and prevent IAQ problems. The Kit also offers easy steps for identifying and correcting current IAQ problems.

The Team

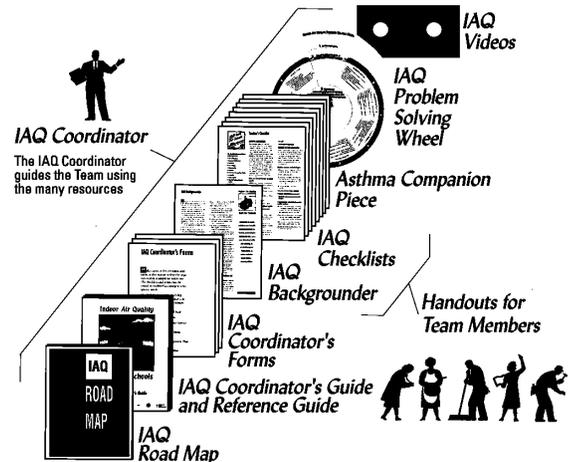
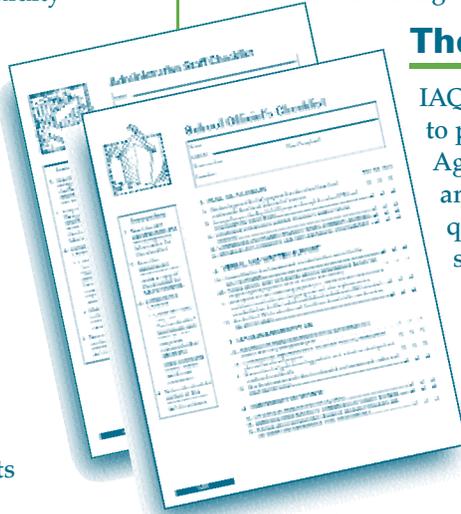
The awareness and effort of a team of individuals will help ensure that your school improves its indoor air quality. The checklists in the *IAQ Tools for Schools Kit* provide a thorough but simple means for all IAQ Team members to participate, including the IAQ coordinator,

administrators, teachers and staff, facility managers, health professionals, maintenance crews, and others.

The Rewards (in addition to good indoor air quality!)

By using the the Kit successfully, your school will have the opportunity to:

- Receive public recognition for outstanding environmental leadership through EPA's National Awards Program.
- Serve as a role model or mentor to other schools.
- Work with EPA to communicate success through case studies.
- Include your Web site link on EPA's IAQ page so other schools can learn from your IAQ efforts.



Order the *IAQ Tools for Schools Kit* today!