

# TEACHERS, STAFF, AND PARENTS

## Your Role on the Indoor Air Quality Team

Indoor Air Quality



Tools for Schools

*"Indoor air quality impacts the physical health of many students, as well as teachers and staff who assist them in learning. It also affects the ability of students to learn and adults to teach them, so the journey to attain and maintain healthy indoor air quality is important."*

— Shelley Harding, Director of Student Achievement, East Valley School District, Spokane, Washington

## Poor Indoor Air Quality Interferes with the Learning Environment

Indoor air pollution is a problem in at least half of our nation's schools—in classrooms and other learning areas such as laboratories, libraries, and gymnasiums. Poor indoor air quality (IAQ) affects your students' health and comfort—and your own—in the following ways:

- Uncomfortable, unhealthy students can be distracted and inattentive. Their concentration and productivity suffer, which may affect their performance.
- Students with asthma or allergies are particularly sensitive to indoor air pollutants, resulting in increased or more severe reactions and episodes.
- Sickness and absenteeism rise. Absent students miss out on valuable learning experiences.
- Your energy levels and performance suffer because of sickness and absenteeism.

The good news is that indoor air pollution is preventable! You can help ensure that classrooms are healthy learning environments, and your students and their parents will be thankful for your effort.

## Ensure a Healthy Classroom for Everyone

The U.S. EPA's *IAQ Tools for Schools* Kit gives your school common-sense guidance on IAQ issues. This practical Kit explains how to identify and prevent IAQ problems and how to resolve them if they occur. As a member of your school's IAQ Team, you are key to ensuring that your classroom is a healthy, comfortable learning space for your students and yourself.

The *IAQ Tools for Schools* Kit is a one-stop resource for your school building's health. The Kit includes a teacher's checklist covering IAQ basics related to classroom chalk dust and dry-erase markers, animals in the classroom, art and science supplies, cleaning supplies, ventilation, and classroom drains, fans, or fume hoods.

Other team members have their own checklists; together, you can evaluate potential IAQ problems and resolve them before they become health hazards. Because you're part of a team, this won't take much of your time. In the process, your students can learn about good IAQ. This is a great way to empower and educate your students while improving IAQ. An IAQ curriculum can cover topics ranging from environmental science to chemistry, statistics, math, and beyond. EPA's Web site offers ideas for adding IAQ to your curriculum.

**Act now to ensure comfort, health, and reduced sick days for your students. Help lower the risk of long-term health problems related to indoor air quality in your school.**

**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](http://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 to 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

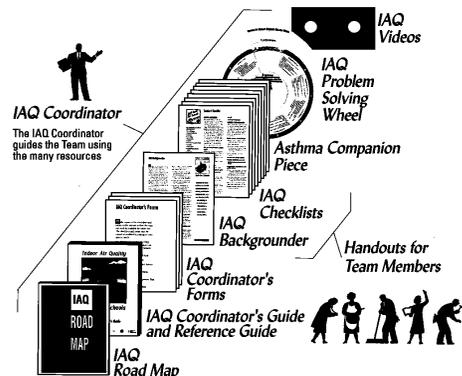
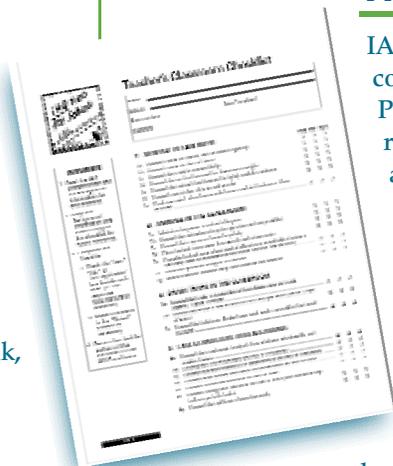
The awareness and effort of a team of individuals will help ensure that your school improves its indoor air quality. The checklists in the *IAQ Tools for Schools Kit* provide a thorough but simple means for all IAQ Team

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 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!**