

Indoor Air Quality Executive Summary

Modern office buildings are generally considered safe and healthful working environments. However, numerous incidences of building-related air quality problems have been documented in the local and national press. Affected parties (building owners, employers and insurance providers) have recognized the potential impact building-related air quality issues can have on their operations and have begun addressing the issue. Indoor air quality incidents range from one or two employees to building wide episodes. Typical symptoms experienced by building occupants include headache, nausea, tiredness, allergies, and eye, nose and throat irritation. Studies conducted by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have indicated that the primary sources of indoor air quality problems are inadequate ventilation, contamination from inside or outside the building and mold growth.

The potential ramifications of indoor air quality problems include increased employee absence, reduced employee morale, employee relation issues, negative publicity, increased medical costs, and legal liability. When faced with indoor air quality concerns, its critical that employers and building owners take a proactive approach in order to address the issue in a timely fashion. Such proactive responses often can prevent or minimize the problems mentioned above.

CorpOHS Industrial Hygiene Professionals have performed numerous indoor air quality studies in office, residential and research environments. Our approach incorporates procedures recommended by NIOSH and other organizations. Depending on the size and scope of the problem, the following activities are involved in CorpOHS's Indoor Air Quality Investigations:

- ❑ An employee health questionnaire to identify symptoms and patterns of their occurrence, and strategies for investigating potential causes.
- ❑ Meetings with the employer and employees to review the plan of action for the investigation and to keep affected parties informed of the status of the study.
- ❑ Evaluation of building ventilation systems to study airflow patterns and fresh air delivery rates to the occupied areas. Measurements of carbon dioxide, temperature and humidity are taken to supplement this evaluation.
- ❑ A complete survey of the building to identify potential sources of indoor air problems.
- ❑ Environmental monitoring to identify and quantify sources of building contaminants. Such contaminants may include mold, carbon monoxide (from outside sources of combustion) and volatile organic hydrocarbons introduced into the work environment by operations and maintenance activities (such as paints, cleaning compounds, carpet glue and pesticides).

CorpOHS can help resolve existing Indoor Air Quality problems or assist in developing proactive Building Air Quality Action Plans to prevent such episodes from occurring. Our industrial hygiene and occupational health professionals will work with your building manager(s) and engineers to help identify potential causes and corrective action.

For further information or assistance, please contact your account representative.