

Indoor Environmental Quality HANDOUT

During the last 20 years, concerns associated with Indoor Environmental Quality (IEQ) have escalated in the American workplace. Most recently, in New Mexico at least six counties have experienced IEQ problems or complaints.

WHAT IS IEQ?



Indoor Environmental Quality, as the name implies, refers to the quality of the environment in an office

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

The causes of IEQ problems are complex, they generally stem from:

- Ventilation system deficiencies
- Office overcrowding
- Off gassing from materials in the office and mechanical equipment
- Smoke
- Microbiological contamination, e.g., mold and mildew
- Outside air pollutants



PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Most IEQ problems can be prevented by following a few practical, common-sense solutions:

- Maintain a clean work area; do not allow storage to accumulate.
- Report all equipment damage, and water leaks or moisture stains in the roof, plumbing, ceiling finish, and carpeting to Building Maintenance, as these deficiencies can cause mold and fungus growth.
- Provide entry mats at building entrances to trap soil and other contaminants.
- Cleaned and vacuumed floors at least weekly.
- Develop a preventive maintenance schedule for all HVAC equipment.
- Ensure the HVAC system is maintained and that all operating equipment and controls are in proper working condition.
- Replace HVAC filters as recommended by the manufacturer. Most roof-mounted units should be replaced monthly.
- Do not modify office areas by covering supply air vents with furnishings, cardboard, etc.
- Ensure pesticides used in facilities do not create additional environmental or IEQ hazards. Review cleaning and pesticide schedules, ensuring cleaning/pesticide agents introducing strong odors or contaminants are done during unoccupied or minimal staffing periods.
- Identify aspects of projects that could affect IEQ and manage these projects to ensure that good IEQ practices are maintained. Projects would include renovations, remodeling, relocating of personnel and functions within the building, and new construction.
- Review all hazardous material product material safety data sheets (MSDS) in the facility to determine their impact on IEQ and appropriateness for the facility. Whenever possible, eliminate hazardous products for less hazardous products.

