

University of Pittsburgh Safety Manual	EH&S Guideline Number: 01-005	
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INDOOR AIR QUALITY

The quality of the indoor working environment and indoor air can affect the performance, health, morale, and productivity of faculty, staff, and students. The most common complaints regarding indoor air quality are in reference to temperature, ventilation, humidity, and odors.

The accumulation of irritating contaminants is another potential source of indoor air quality problems. These contaminants within a building can originate from inside the building, such as smoking, molds, cleaning agents, new building materials and furnishings, or from external sources such as construction operations and pesticides.

Controlling contaminants at the source is the most effective means of promoting good indoor air quality. Proper ventilation is also important especially if controlling the pollutant at the source is not possible or practical. University building occupants should eliminate practices which restrict air movement, such as blocking air vents with furniture or covering supply vents to control temperature.

1. All verbal and written complaints associated with Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) should be forwarded to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S). IAQ complaints or allegations may include but are not limited to:
 - Temperature, humidity, and other comfort concerns
 - Room “stuffiness” or “closeness”
 - Air contamination such as odors, vapors, mold, particulates or secondhand smoke
 - Perceived medical conditions such as allergic type reactions and other health-related symptoms that became manifested or exaggerated while in a space or room
2. A representative of EH&S shall promptly contact the complainant to obtain more information.
3. If the complaints are confined to temperature and comfort levels, EH&S will contact the appropriate building representative (Facilities Management, Property Management, or Housing) to attempt the necessary adjustments. In many of these instances, EH&S involvement may not be necessary when the concern is resolved directly by the building representative.
4. If the complaint involves concerns which exceed comfort conditions, EH&S will conduct a field visit to the site of alleged problems. Prior to the site visit, the supervisor of the complainant or the area manager will be notified of EH&S presence and nature of visit. The results of the EH&S assessment will be shared with the building representative to identify potential sources of the concern and potential abatement measures.

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5. If faculty and staff allege health effects associated with the work site, they will be requested to visit Employee Health Services, 3708 Fifth Ave., Medical Arts Building, Suite 500.59, Monday-Friday 7:30am-4:00pm for a medical evaluation. If a student alleges health effects associated with the academic or University housing environment, they will be requested to visit Student Health Services, 119 University Place, Nordenberg Hall for a medical evaluation. In either instance, EH&S shall notify Risk Management of the occurrence.
6. The results of the on-site EH&S assessment of the involved space, the detailed description of IAQ allegations, and the outcome of associated medical evaluations will be utilized to formulate an action plan for remediation. EH&S will provide recommendations to designated representatives of Facilities Management, Housing or Property Management as indicated by building for suggested remedial actions. EH&S may collect preliminary indoor air quality data to monitor the levels of carbon dioxide, temperature, and relative humidity in certain instances to assist in formulation of the remediation plan.
7. If all suggested remedial actions have been implemented and symptoms or complaints persist, EH&S will consider performing more extensive air sampling. Air monitoring is most feasible when specific pollutants or contaminants are suspected. In other cases, air monitoring results rarely exceed documented guidelines and are often inconclusive, since consensus air quality standards do not exist.
8. In the event that data is collected regarding the air in the involved space, EH&S will utilize the following established standards regarding acceptable indoor air quality:

American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers
Incorporated, standard 62.2-2019; ACGIH Threshold Limit Values; EPA-published
Environmental Standards