

Indoor Air Quality Program

General

Indoor and outdoor factors such as seasonal pollen, allergens, chemicals, temperature, humidity, renovation and construction work, and other activities and materials may affect a building’s air quality. This document is the written standard operating procedure used by Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) for the management of indoor air quality concerns.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

EHS has developed this written program to establish standard procedures for the management of indoor air quality (IAQ) concerns to ensure the safety of faculty, staff, students, and visitors in Texas A&M facilities.

Scope

The Indoor Air Quality Program applies to all Texas A&M University employees and all owned facilities and indoor environments. Any mold investigation or remediation activities will be conducted in accordance with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) administrative rules.

Revisions

These procedures shall be reviewed annually. Revisions to the IAQ Program shall be made by the staff Industrial Hygienist or other qualified individual designated by the EHS Director.

Responsibilities

EHS will

- Develop and maintain the Indoor Air Quality Program
- Provide assistance to departments or other administrative units in resolving indoor air quality concerns
- Respond to employee complaints related to indoor air quality
- Conduct indoor air quality investigations when there are reported employee health concerns and/or symptoms related to work environment
- Document and report indoor air quality investigations and prepare mold remediation protocols when necessary

- Collaborate with Facilities Services, building proctors, departmental administration, or the respective campus representative in the remediation of indoor air quality concerns
- Conduct monitoring or clearance sampling for indoor air quality and mold as necessary
- Communicate investigation results to requestors

Departments will

- Notify EHS when employees have health concerns or symptoms related to their work environment via the IAQ Survey Request Form
- Implement remedial recommendations or initiate work orders as necessary
- Provide alternate accommodations to employees when necessary

Employees will

- Inform his/her supervisor of health concerns or symptoms related to their work environment
- Notify EHS via the IAQ Survey Request Form

Facilities Services will

- Complete work orders for recommended or requested remediation activities
- Procure services of an appropriately licensed mold remediation company when required by mold remediation protocol

PROGRAM PROCESSES

Indoor air quality concerns should be reported and addressed according to the following procedures:

Gas Odors Indoors/Near Buildings

If you smell a gas odor, or if a gas monitor alarm sounds and reads “GAS”:

- Call the Communications Center at 979-845-4311 and provide them your name, the location of the leak, and where you will meet the emergency responders. If there is no answer, call 911 from a cellular or university phone.
- Warn others in the immediate area
- Evacuate the immediate area
- Notify the Department Head, Building Proctor, Resident Advisor if appropriate
- Prevent the use of or remove sources of ignition (cigarettes, electrical equipment, etc.) from the area
- Meet with and assist emergency response personnel
- Do not re-enter the area until cleared by authorized personnel

Physical Discomfort

Contact Facilities Services or submit a work order for the following concerns:

- Temperature or humidity issues
- Stagnant or stale air
- Drafty air
- Particulates or dirt coming from the HVAC system diffusers
- Pressure balance issues

Odor Complaints

Contact Facilities Services or submit a work order for odors associated with the following:

- Rotten eggs
- Sewer
- Musty/stagnant air

Contact EHS for strong or unusual odors associated with the following:

- Chemicals
- Spills or accidental releases of hazardous materials

NOTE: All incidental releases of chemicals should be handled as indicated by the associated Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and lab or work area standard procedures.

Health Concerns

Employees who have health related concerns that they believe may be related to their work environment should notify their supervisor and submit the IAQ Request Form. EHS will contact the requestor to schedule an investigation of the work area. Departmental administration should provide reasonable accommodations to the affected employee, as needed.

Mold

Contact Facilities Services if there is a concern of visible mold with less than 25 square feet of coverage, or if there are odors associated with a recent water intrusion (flood, leak, broken pipe, etc.) or HVAC system malfunction.

Contact EHS if there is a concern of mold without an obvious source or with visible coverage exceeding 25 square feet.

Assessment Process

When notified and if determined to be necessary, EHS staff will perform an indoor air quality assessment as follows:

- Review the Indoor Air Quality Survey Request Form when available
- Collect information regarding the issue by communicating with building occupants, departmental administration, and facilities personnel
- Conduct an on-site investigation, which may include air monitoring or sampling for temperature, humidity, carbon dioxide, oxygen, hydrogen sulfide, volatile organic compounds (VOC), mold, particulates, or other known or suspected indoor air contaminants.
- Record findings and recommend remedial actions, which may include a Mold Remediation Protocol
- Report findings to survey requestor, department, or other applicable entity

ACCEPTABLE STANDARDS

Unless work practices, facility design, or personnel requirements necessitate a variance, EHS evaluates indoor air quality acceptability based on the following parameters:

Temperature: 70-76°F, dependent on season and occupancy
Relative Humidity: 30-60%; Levels above 60% may encourage mold growth
Carbon Dioxide: Within 700 ppm of outdoor level
Carbon Monoxide: Lower than outdoors; Levels above 9 ppm should be investigated
Oxygen: 20.9%; Any variation should be investigated
Hydrogen Sulfide: Any level should be investigated
VOC: Dependent on source; Any level should be investigated
Tobacco Smoke: No indoor levels

RECORDKEEPING

EHS will document all IAQ assessment findings. Survey request forms, notes, reports, and remediation protocols will be maintained by EHS.

REFERENCES

1. Texas A&M University Gas Reporting, Dispatch, and Response Procedures
2. Indoor Air Quality, EPA: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq>
3. Texas Voluntary Indoor Air Quality Guidelines for Government Buildings; TDSHS: <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/iaq/SchoolsGuide.shtm>
4. Mold Assessors and Remediators Administrative Rules, TDLR: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/mld/mlrules.htm#7852>
5. Indoor Air Quality Survey Request Form, EHS: <https://ehsd.tamu.edu/IAQ%20Forms/IAQ%20Survey%20Request%20Form.pdf>