



Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) - Guidelines to Investigation

Response to a Concern:

All IAQ concerns should be acknowledged and investigated as quickly as possible. Please contact EH&S at 6114/6111. It is a best practice to keep a written record of the concern, investigation findings and resolution.

Data Collection:

The person(s) reporting an IAQ situation should be interviewed to gather as much information as possible. This information should include the nature of the concern, the timing, and person(s) symptoms, health effects, observed conditions at time of symptoms, such as odors, weather, occupant activities, and specific location of problem. If several people and locations are involved, the Risk Management and EH&S IAQ survey questionnaire shall be used to help determine if the problem covers a specific location or is throughout most of an area or building, and if there are one or more concerns. Results of the questionnaire may also be used to compare with building drawings to locate causes of the concerns and sources.

On-site Investigation:

The investigation should be conducted to locate any problem conditions or materials. Measuring temperature and humidity is recommended. Any visible microbial, chemical or material sources, including the presence of odors, should be noted. During the investigation, the information gathered from the interviews should be compared with possible health effects of various sources of concern, such as listed in Texas Department of State Health Services Section 297.7 Table 1 to aid in determining possible sources to look for in the space and related areas.

Corrective Action:

Check for dampness and moisture intrusion due to potential leaks. The operation and condition of the HVAC system should be verified to ensure that adequate acceptable outside air provisions are being met. Check for drafts or stagnant areas. Check whether the layout of air supplies, returns, and exhausts promotes efficient air distribution to all occupants and isolates or dilutes the sources of concern. Check for short circuiting, airflow patterns and air velocity in occupied zone. Possible exterior sources of concern, such as vehicle exhausts, maintenance and construction operations and levels of natural exterior allergens should be noted. If suspected or other sources of concern are identified, perform any necessary corrective actions using established and appropriate control methods for the situation.

Most of the time, the resolution of concerns is usually determined based on the occupant interviews and on-site inspections and are often the only actions needed to resolve the concern.

Performing tests for IAQ, unless conducted at the time of alleged exposure, are unlikely to locate or measure a transient condition, and are not recommended for most investigations. If specific



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conditions are suspected and a need for verification testing is required based on the visual inspection, health symptoms, clinical data and contents, and practices of the facility, then appropriate test methods should be performed by qualified personnel. Please contact at EH&S at 6114/6111 for testing requests.

Communication:

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to providing ideal, transparent and safe working environment. Therefore, steps should be taken to ensure that up-to-date information is provided to building occupants and other concerned parties regarding any on-going IAQ investigations, planned repairs or remediation projects.

References:

1. Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq>
2. Texas Department of State Health Services: <https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/iaq/>