

Hottest Tips for Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Management This Summer

With students away on break, summertime offers a great opportunity to take a look at your school's current IAQ management practices in order to ensure that actions are being taken safely and effectively.

Use the 10 tips below to ensure that you are prepared when the school doors open in the fall!

1. Start or revitalize your IAQ management plan based on the Key Drivers and Technical Solutions in the Framework for Effective School IAQ Management. Make adjustments as necessary to ensure the sustainability of your program.
2. Conduct walkthroughs of your school buildings to identify and prioritize any IAQ issues. Use the checklists in the IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit to learn what to look for regarding ventilation, waste management, renovations and repairs, and many other areas.
3. Adjust HVAC systems for partial loading conditions to allow for maximum dehumidification and reduced energy needs during unoccupied periods in the hot and humid season. Use data loggers or humidistats to monitor space conditions.
4. Maintain a relative humidity level under 60 percent and allow room spaces to stay within 80-85°F to reduce energy waste and prevent mold and moisture issues.
5. Review summer repairs and equipment and materials purchases to be sure they align with your IAQ management plan.
6. Relocate activities that occur on school grounds during the summer, such as summer school classes, meetings, etc., to areas without a centralized HVAC system so that smaller cooling systems can provide the needed air conditioning.
7. Eliminate unnecessary plug loads by unplugging appliances such as small refrigerators and using power strips to turn off electricity to small appliances and computers.
8. Ensure cleaned carpets are thoroughly dried to prevent mold growth in the hot and humid months (Wet Carpeting + No Ventilation = MOLD). If there are mold issues, follow EPA's guidelines for mold remediation in schools.
9. Use non-toxic cleaners, adhesives, paints, pesticides, solvents, carpeting, equipment and furnishings to reduce chemical fumes. For chemicals used in your school, implement a hazardous materials plan detailing use, labeling, storage and disposal using the Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign as a resource.

10. Obtain the support of top level management to promote your efforts. Securing commitments from school leaders provides you with the support you need to meet your school district's IAQ management goals. Use the top 5 talking points for obtaining buy-in to stress the importance of IAQ to members of your school community.

For more tips on taking action this summer, review EPA's summer tips fact sheet and an archived webinar presentation titled "Implementing IAQ Tools for Schools: Proper Building Maintenance for Summer Months." <http://www.epa.gov/iaq>