

Maintaining Healthy Indoor Air Quality in Public School Buildings

Guidance for New Jersey Public Employers to Protect Public Health

Overview: Poor indoor air quality is one of the most commonly reported complaints in New Jersey public buildings. If not addressed, indoor contaminants like mold can build up when ventilation systems are not functioning effectively. Contaminants can also be introduced by construction/renovation projects within the building or from exterior sources entering a building. Health effects caused by poor indoor air quality can range from general malaise, such as fatigue and headache, to more serious symptoms such as asthma and infections.

Proper operation of your facility's HVAC system is important for maintaining healthy indoor air quality. [The New Jersey Indoor Air Quality \(IAQ\) standard, N.J.A.C. 12:100-13 \(2007\)](#), sets standards for indoor air quality in existing buildings occupied by public employees during their regular working hours.

Resources for Maintaining a Healthy Indoor Environment

- ✓ [Disinfectant Use -- Do It Right!](#)
- ✓ [Air Cleaning Devices and Ozone-What Schools Need to Know](#)
- ✓ [Tips to Improve Indoor Ventilation](#)
- ✓ [Ventilation in Schools and Childcare Programs](#)
- ✓ [Interactive School Ventilation Tool](#)

PEOSH IAQ Standard – Employer Requirements

- ✓ Read the [IAQ Standard](#) and [Inspection Checklist](#).
- ✓ Assign a Designated Person (DP).
- ✓ Establish a [Written Plan](#).
- ✓ Establish accurate recordkeeping.
- ✓ Establish and follow a [Preventive Maintenance Log](#).
- ✓ Implement the use of general or local exhaust ventilation.
- ✓ Ensure the HVAC is operating as designed during periods of extreme hot or cold seasonal conditions.
- ✓ Identify air contaminant sources which may impact indoor air quality.
- ✓ Keep carbon dioxide levels in check to ensure adequate ventilation.
- ✓ Maintain and use natural building ventilation when appropriate.
- ✓ Document and investigate employee complaints of signs or symptoms which indicate indoor air quality may be adversely impacted.
- ✓ Visit the [PEOSH Indoor Air Quality website](#) for more resources.



Consider Additional Facility Enhancements

The [CDC](#) outlines a series of recommendations to consider when evaluating HVAC systems. Within the design specification of the HVAC unit consider the following ventilation system upgrades/improvements:

- Increase ventilation rates.
- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
- Increase outdoor air ventilation, using caution in highly polluted areas. With a lower occupancy level in the building, this increases the effective dilution ventilation per person.
- Disable demand-controlled ventilation (DCV).
- Open outdoor air dampers (as high as 100%) to reduce or eliminate recirculation as weather permits.
- Improve central air filtration to the MERV-13 or the highest compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.
- Check filters to ensure they are within service life and appropriately installed.
- Keep systems running longer hours, 24/7 if possible, to enhance air exchanges.
- Consider portable HEPA/Ultraviolet systems to help enhance indoor air cleaning.