

Northwestern

DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY & SECURITY
ENVIRONMENTAL
HEALTH & SAFETY

Indoor Air Quality

We believe our students, employees, and guests deserve a healthful and comfortable work environment. We're dedicated to addressing problems that may be associated with poor indoor air quality on campus.

Indoor air quality (IAQ) refers to the air quality within and around buildings and structures, especially as it relates to the health, comfort, and performance of building occupants, as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) recognizes that worker productivity significantly increases when air quality is adequate.

Common IAQ factors that could affect the health and wellbeing of occupants include air emissions from carpets and furnishings, construction activities, temperature, and water damage. It is important to note that not all indoor environment concerns may be caused by indoor air quality factors, but instead may be caused by insects, lighting, job-related stress, noise, workstation design, and transient odors pulled into the building, such as vehicle exhaust, asphalt fumes, and paint.

Factors that May Affect an Indoor Environment



Furnishings & Carpets
Lighting

Workstation Design
Indoor Temperatures
Relative Humidity
Water-Damaged Materials



Cleaning Products
Outdoor Pollutants

Mold & Bacterial Growth
Transient Outdoor Odors
Cigarette Smoke
Perfumes & Colognes



Insects
Noise

Office Machines
Construction Activities
Ventilation Levels
Job-Related Stress

How We Can Help

As part of our commitment to provide a comfortable and healthy environment at Northwestern, Environmental Health and Safety provides indoor air quality assessments. During an IAQ assessment, we interview employees, collaborate with Facilities Management to understand the building history, and review the work space. In some instances we will use air monitoring equipment to analyze and identify possible air contaminants.

IAQ Assessments

If you have any questions, concerns, or would like to schedule an indoor air quality assessment, contact Environmental Health and Safety at ehs@northwestern.edu