

Indoor Air Quality at Dickinson

Indoor Air Quality

Dickinson College is committed to the health and safety of all members of the college community, and maintaining a healthy indoor environment in all of our buildings is part of this commitment.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) defines indoor air quality (IAQ) as the air quality within and around buildings and structures, especially as it relates to the health and comfort of building occupants. There are many factors that contribute to indoor air quality, a few examples are: ventilation, temperature and humidity levels, buildings materials, and cleaning products and other chemicals used in the building. Personal choices, such as the use of air fresheners, scented candles, growing of house plants and storage of food can also impact IAQ. In a study conducted by the Cleaner Indoor Air Campaign, it was found that the average scented product, such as “laundry detergent, personal care products, cleaning supplies, and air fresheners” emit an “average of 17 VOCs^[1] per product.”^[2] Many VOCs are “classified as toxic or hazardous under U.S. federal laws, and each of products [referred to above] emitted at least one of these compounds.”^[3] Fragranced products, and other products that contain VOCs, can provoke allergy symptoms in sensitive individuals.

Indoor Air Quality Managers

The Director of Compliance & Enterprise Risk Management and the Associate Vice President of Facilities Management and the Director of Trades serve as the IAQ managers. All concerns pertaining to indoor air quality will be directed to them for investigation and to determine what the course of action, if any, is necessary.

Reporting an IAQ Concern

To report IAQ concerns, contact Facilities Management at extension 1212. When calling, please provide as much detail as possible, including location, description of problem, when it was first noticed and any other information that may be helpful in identifying the cause.

For emergencies, such as breathing difficulties, chemical spills, gray water (sewer) backups or spills, or any other emergency, move to fresh air and contact the Department of Public Safety immediate at extension 1111 from a campus phone or 717-245-1111 from a cell phone or off campus.

Investigation and Corrective Action

The initial investigation by the college will include interviews with the person who reported the concern, and well as the occupants of the area, if different from the person who made the report. Additionally, a visual inspection of the area and its air handling sources will occur. Depending on the circumstances, this inspection may include measuring temperature, relative humidity, carbon monoxide, and carbon dioxide. If more extensive testing is warranted, a professional consultant will be engaged. In conducting investigations and determining outcomes, the college or the consultants it retains may refer to various guidance documents from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers

(ASHRAE), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH).

The person who reported the problem, as well as the occupants of the space in question (if different from the reporter) will be apprised of the findings of the investigation, the proposed corrective action, and the timetable for completion.

Mold

If mold growth is observed and a moisture problem is identified, efforts will be made to address the mold contamination by cleaning or removing affected components in accordance with the Dickinson College Indoor Air Quality Policy and Mold Protocol. The extent of the contamination and size of the area involved will dictate whether College employees or contractors will do the work.

If the source of the mold is identified and resolved, ongoing testing will not be routinely conducted as remediating the condition should resolve the issue. Should the IAQ Managers determine that mold ongoing or follow up testing is warranted, a consultant will be called in.

If a visual investigation results in negative findings for mold-like substances, moisture, or other findings of potential concern and the Office of Compliance and Enterprise Risk Management and Facilities Management do not find evidence of an indoor air quality concern, further testing will not be routinely conducted.

After an IAQ issue is identified and resolved, the College will generally take steps to ensure that it does not recur by performing routine and preventative maintenance and/or other proactive measures.

Renovations and New Construction

IAQ is a priority when renovating existing buildings or building new ones. Important aspects such as site location and space planning, building envelope and HVAC system design, material selection and work practices are carefully considered in the planning phases and throughout these projects.

Plan Review

This plan will be periodically reviewed by Compliance & Enterprise Risk Management and Facilities Management to ensure that we are using best possible practices and that our policy is in line with current regulatory guidance.

[1] VOC is an acronym that stands for volatile organic compounds.

[2] <http://cleanerindoorair.org/publications/handouts/fragrance-tidbits/>

[3] Ibid.

Save Changes

Revert

