



## Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

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### NEWS AND EVENTS

- **Participate in EPA's Asthma in Schools Webinar.** Join the Strategic Collaboration for Effective Asthma Management in Schools webinar to hear leading asthma experts discuss how to identify and collaborate with community partners to improve asthma management in schools, increase community awareness about asthma, control asthma's impact on students and improve academic performance. The webinar will be held **September 12, 2012**, from 2 – 3 p.m. EDT. [Register today!](#)
- **Read About Sensible Steps to Healthier School Environments.** This new EPA resource describes cost-effective, affordable measures to protect the health of students and staff. It covers common school issues, such as lead, mercury and mold, as well as how to conserve resources and conduct a facility assessment. This guidance also includes the Top Ten Ways to Make Your School Healthier. [View or download this resource](#) to learn more.
- **Attend the World Congress on Education Environments.** This conference, hosted by the Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI), will allow you to connect, share and engage with educational facility planners, architects, designers, educators and suppliers in the K-12 school facility industry. Representatives from EPA will also be attending this conference to promote the *IAQ Tools for Schools* guidance — come by the EPA booth and say hi. The conference will be held **September 22-24, 2012**, in San Antonio, Texas. [Register today!](#)
- **Register Your Service Project Event for Green Apple Day of Service.** On **September 29, 2012**, the Center for Green Schools at the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is hosting the first annual [Green Apple Day of Service](#). For one day, tens of thousands of people will come together

#### Did You Know ....

Resources from EPA's [Technical Webinar — Reducing Radon in Schools](#) are now available online!

This webinar provided technical guidance about effective radon testing and control strategies for schools, including how to operate and install a radon mitigation depressurization system. You can access all of the webinar resources, including the **presentation slides**, an **audio recording**, and a **Question and Answer document**, by visiting the [Webinar Resource](#) page.

#### Share YOUR news and events!

Send us information to share with the school IAQ community. It could be featured in the next Connector e-newsletter. Email your news and events to [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

#### Should we have our schools tested for radon? How do we keep mold from returning once it has been removed?

Find answers to these and other questions on the Schools IAQ Connector Email Discussion List. **Join today** by sending a blank email message to

to take part in hundreds of service projects at schools across the country and around the world. Projects can include performing an IAQ walkthrough, “green” cleaning a classroom or implementing any number of indoor environmental improvements. To date, there are more than 300 service projects with events registered on every continent in the world. Now is the time to make sure your community is involved by using your skills and experience to organize a service project near you. Register an event today at [mygreenapple.org](http://mygreenapple.org) or contact Rob Morici at [rmorici@usgbc.org](mailto:rmorici@usgbc.org) for more information.

[schools\\_iaq\\_connector-subscribe@lists.epa.gov](mailto:schools_iaq_connector-subscribe@lists.epa.gov). Then check your email inbox for confirmation and membership details.

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### Access Previous Connector E-Newsletters Online

Can't find a previous *IAQ Tools for Schools* Connector e-newsletter in your email inbox? No problem! Visit the [e-newsletter archive](#) on the *IAQ Tools for Schools* website to access printable versions (PDFs) of all past editions.

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## BACK-TO-SCHOOL BASICS — CONDUCT IAQ WALKTHROUGHS

Back-to-school is a great time to reinvigorate your school's IAQ management routine and to ensure the new school year is as healthy, productive and successful as possible.

The *IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit* has checklists for each aspect of school IAQ management. IAQ team members, administrators, maintenance and facilities staff, school nurses, and others involved in creating a healthy indoor school environment can use the checklists to conduct thorough top to bottom assessments of the entire school facility.

During the walkthrough, use your **basic senses** to identify IAQ concerns:

**Look** at the general level of cleanliness in classrooms and mechanical rooms. Watch for potential **pollutant sources** including mold, improperly stored chemicals, or excessively dirty air filters and ducts. Look for signs of water damage, which may point to an underlying problem. Water damage increases the chance of biological contamination. Look for books or papers on top of unit ventilators or plywood covering outdoor air intakes.

**Smell** for unique or objectionable odors — including mold, mildew and “chemical” smells — as you move from room to room. Note any potential sources of these odors.

**Feel** for uncomfortable air temperatures, drafts, and high or low humidity. Check for air flowing into and out of grilles and **air vents**.

**Listen** to the concerns of school occupants regarding IAQ. Do they experience any **IAQ-related symptoms** in classrooms? Do they store and use their own sprays to control pests? Do they turn off the unit ventilator during class because it is too noisy? Listen for unusual equipment noises that may indicate potential problems.

For more information on conducting IAQ walkthroughs, review the checklists included with the *IAQ Tools for Schools Action Kit*. You can download checklists in PDF or Word formats, and can tailor them to fit your school's needs.

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## TIPS FOR TEACHERS — GET YOUR CLASSROOMS READY FOR FALL

Teachers can be powerful advocates for creating healthy indoor environments, including improving school IAQ. As they are on the front lines, teachers can perceive when IAQ changes affect students and themselves.

The most effective school IAQ management teams often include a [concerned teacher](#) who is passionate about keeping students healthy and encouraging their top performance. Use your voice to promote health, wellness and academic productivity in preparation for the new school year.

Check out the **top tips for teachers** below to ensure that you are prepared when the school doors open in the fall.



- Conduct a [classroom walkthrough](#) to help maintain general classroom cleanliness, reduce moisture and identify other necessary preventative actions.
- Understand the effects of poor IAQ on [student productivity and health](#). Recent research links key environmental factors to health outcomes and students' ability to perform.
- Integrate IAQ topics into [lesson plans](#), to empower students to take action and improve school IAQ and help build understanding and support for a school-wide IAQ management program. IAQ issues could be taught in environmental science, chemistry, statistics, math and many other classes.
- Report any IAQ issues, such as mold and moisture, and other maintenance problems occurring in classrooms and hallways immediately.
- Ensure adequate ventilation by keeping [ventilation units](#) in your classrooms free of clutter, including books, papers and other classroom items.
- If classroom pets cause allergic reactions or trigger [asthma attacks](#), relocate the pet away from sensitive students or consider replacing the animal with a classroom fish, or an animal that will not trigger allergy and asthma attacks in any students. Some school districts have policies that ban pets with fur or feathers.
- Reduce the number of items made of cloth in your classroom, including furniture, draperies or stuffed animals. These materials attract dust mites, which can negatively impact sensitive students.
- Practice safe [chemical management](#) in your classrooms, if appropriate.

For more tips on taking action in preparation for fall, visit EPA's [Teachers and Healthy Indoor School Environments](#) Web page.

## GET ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

Is there a topic you want to see covered in an *IAQ Tools for Schools* Connector e-newsletter? Do you have suggestions for a webinar or e-newsletter feature, or do you have questions about a specific IAQ topic? If so, send us an email at [IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com](mailto:IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com).

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The *IAQ Tools for Schools* guidance is a comprehensive resource designed to help schools maintain a healthy environment in school buildings by identifying, correcting and preventing IAQ problems. Learn more about the *IAQ Tools for Schools* guidance at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools>.