INDOOR AIR QUALITY PROCESS
Ref: OPNAVINST 5100.23G para 3002

Start

Are personnel working in an environment where consistent adverse health symptom, e.g., respiratory, symptoms exist?

Yes

Employee reports problems to supervisor. Supervisor coordinates all contact with Public Works (PW) (if known or suspected facilities issue is the cause of symptoms) and command’s Safety Office.

No

End

Safety Office requests Industrial Hygienist to initiate an IAQ investigation. Industrial Hygienist contacts employee and requests them to complete the standard Navy IAQ questionnaire and symptom log forms.

PW investigates any potential facility issues, including those involved with heating, ventilation, and/or air-conditioning (HVAC) system(s) in the employee’s work environment, to determine if they are the possible causes of the IAQ issue. Determine if HVAC systems are operating satisfactorily, addressing such factors as:
- Design air flow is met (if not, the result can be higher than normal carbon dioxide levels, possibly resulting in drowsiness or perception that symptoms having other causes are worse than normally expected)
- Filters are regularly inspected and changed if dirty, have holes in them, or otherwise needed for other causes (so that air contaminants are removed prior to air is delivered by the HVAC system into the employee’s work environment)
- Ductwork is inspected and cleaned of dirty using special methods such as “spinning brushes”
- Temperatures inside the work environment are maintained at normal levels per ANSI/ASHRAE standards

Industrial Hygienist (IH) reviews questionnaire and symptom log forms once submitted by employee. Once forms are reviewed, contacts employee for clarification of provided information if needed, and shares investigation strategy. Evaluates potential cause factors such as:
- Unacceptable humidity and temperature levels using ANSI/ASHRAE guidelines; low humidity air can cause dryness and irritation of the eyes and upper respiratory tract.
- Higher than normal levels of carbon dioxide, possibly resulting in drowsiness or perception that symptoms having other causes are worse than normally expected
- Presence of unusual airborne chemicals:
  - Off-gassed if new upholstered furnishings such as a furniture, or new carpet, are present
  - Identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as common cause of IAQ health symptoms
- Mold—visible or suspected of being present, e.g., underside of carpet
- Suspected presence of house dust, pollen, or other material identified by employee and/or employee’s attending health professional as being identified or suspected allergens
- Inadequate performance or maintenance of HVAC system (as discussed above) or any other facility issue (referred to Public Works for investigation and action)

Is the Safety Office and/or PW (as applicable) able to identify the cause(s) of the problem?

Yes

Activity implements corrective actions

No

The Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center is contacted to request a Consultative Assistance Team (CAT) Team for further investigation by IAQ experts. CAT Team investigates and recommends corrective actions.