# Safety Alert

We're Serious About Safety

## Indoor Air Quality

The quality of indoor air in the work environment is important because it can impact the health, comfort, well-being, and productivity of employees. Indoor pollution sources that release gases or particles into the air are the primary cause of indoor air quality problems. Inadequate ventilation can increase indoor pollutant levels by not bringing in enough outdoor air to dilute emissions from indoor sources and by not carrying indoor air pollutants out of the workplace. High temperature and humidity levels can also increase concentrations of some pollutants.

### Sources of Air Polluntants

**Building Site or Location:** Where a building is located determines what is being brought into the facility from the outside. Common outside contaminants include: pollen, dust, industrial pollution, vehicle emissions, and waste containers. Buildings with multiple tenants may be adversely affected by air quality in operations of the other building tenants.

**Building Systems Design and Maintenance:** When the HVAC system is not functioning properly by not delivering enough fresh air and/or filtering out dust particles and contaminants, it can result in poor air quality. Roofs, windows and doors that leak, and poor drainage that lets water in through the basement or walls creates a potential for mold and bacterial growth.

**Renovation Activities:** When painting and other renovations are being conducted, dust or other by-products of the construction materials are sources of pollutants that may circulate through a building. Isolation by barriers and increased ventilation to dilute and remove the contaminants are recommended.

**Building Furnishings:** Cabinetry or furniture constructed of certain pressed-wood products may release pollutants into the indoor air, along with vapors from carpeting, window coverings, and decorative materials.

### Indoor Air Quality - Three Strategy Controls

1. Manage the sources of pollutants by removing them or by isolating them through physical barriers or by controlling the timing of their use.
2. Dilute pollutants and remove them from the building through ventilation.
3. Use filtration to clean the air of pollutants.

### Prevention Checklist

- ☐ Remove common sources of indoor air pollution such as cleaning materials, deodorizers, and pesticides to ensure that all chemicals and products used within the indoor environment have been approved for indoor use.
- ☐ Periodically clean upholstered furniture, carpets and rugs, and maintain floors, ceilings and walls free of dust and debris.
- ☐ Inspect and assess the building envelope, including the roof, walls, and foundation for water leaks, and any visible damp or moist areas of the building.
- ☐ Ensure that routine maintenance of the HVAC system is being performed, including the performance of the system bringing outdoor air into the building.
- ☐ Ensure that good housekeeping practices are utilized.
- ☐ Ensure that routine preventive maintenance and upkeep of buildings is being performed.
- ☐ Monitor and ensure that the temperature and humidity are maintained in a recommended comfort range (temperature: 68 to 78 degrees and relative humidity: 30% to 60%).

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