

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS
IN OUR HOMES, SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES



February 1, 2015

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GIHN New Member

Virginia Black lives in Arizona. She was exposed to stachybotrys in her apartment. She is joining GIHN to help spread the word and raise awareness.

Please join me in welcoming Virginia.

Individuals and businesses can request an application for membership by going to the GIHN website and completing the request form on the [Contact Us](#) page.

Potential Class Action Lawsuit Against HUD Apartments

A Tallahassee-based law firm said it's looking into filing a class action lawsuit on behalf of nearly 50 people who live in HUD apartment complexes in Jacksonville.

Robert Barnhill is an administrative legal assistant with the Bernard Daley law firm. He said they're looking into a series of allegations about dangerous living conditions in a handful of low-income communities.

John Starling moved to the Willow Lakes apartment complex in September. He's convinced he has black mold.

"It's frustrating because I came out here thinking I'd have a safe and clean environment to live in," he said.

Starling has severe asthma and has had respiratory issues for months. The roof was blown off his old unit following a storm in November. He said he was moved to a new unit that he now believes has black mold growing between the walls.

"It's awful. There are so many sick kids out there, it's crazy. People really don't understand how serious it is. For it to be swept under the rug is even worse," she said.

Barnhill said based on the pictures and evidence they've collected so far, there's a serious problem.

"Our goal is to have HUD demo these properties," he said.

Barnhill said potential plaintiffs can call the law firm at 850-270-2123.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Testing Your Home for Radon* on page 2

The Importance of Testing Your Home for Radon

If you want to live a more sustainable life and protect your family from cancer, learn about one of the home's most dangerous pollutants: radon. **Radon is a cancer – causing natural radioactive gas that you can't see or smell. It's the leading cause of lung cancer among nonsmokers and claims about 20,000 lives every year.**

Although some lung cancers can be treated, the survival rate is one of the lowest for those with cancer. Fortunately, many of the causes of lung cancer can be prevented – and this is especially true for radon.

The Office of the Surgeon General has issued a health advisory warning Americans about the risk from breathing radon in indoor air. Americans are urged to test their homes to find out how much radon they might be breathing.

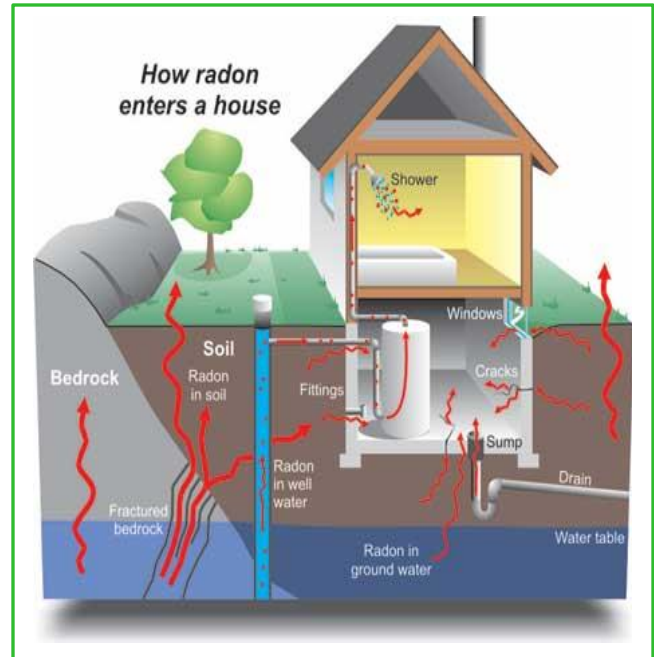
Radon comes from the natural (radioactive) breakdown of uranium in soil, rock and water and gets in to the air you breathe. Radon can be found all over the U.S. It can get into any type of building – homes, offices and schools – and can climb to high levels if it's trapped indoors.

For most of us, the greatest exposure to radon is in our homes, whether your home is old or new. Any home, any type, any location can have a radon problem. If your home has not been tested, now is a good time to take the test. This will help protect your family's health and it's easy to do.

Iowa has the highest percentage of homes above the EPA action level of 4pCi/L, as many as five in seven homes. In 2014, the average radon level in Monona County was 7.8pCi/L.

The indoor air quality of your home can affect your family's health. You can test your home yourself or hire a qualified radon measurement professional. Fixing a radon problem is easy too – and doesn't have to be costly. Radon reduction systems can lower radon to a safer level indoors.

Click [here](#) to read the article.



Erie County Lawmakers to Vote on E-Cigarette Ban (New York)

A four-page local law proposal could have a major impact on those who vape in Erie County.

If the law is passed, e-cigarette users would not be allowed to vape in public spaces, where smoking cigarettes is already against the law.

According to the law, "It is not in the best interests of the county or its residents to permit the use of e-cigarettes in public."

Erie County Health Commissioner Dr. Gale Burstein even voiced concern about the lack of oversight. She's concerned about the possibility of harmful toxins that could come from some of the vapors.

"Limiting exposure to products that could have negative health effects for a whole community is a step toward promoting public health and is a smart thing to do," Burstein said.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Mould has taken over apartment* on page 3

Mould has Taken Over Apartment in Dublin (Ireland)

A mother of two in north Dublin has been forced to sleep on a mattress in the living room of her rented apartment with her children as mould has taken over all the bedrooms.

Kate has been living in the two bed apartment since spring last year and first noticed mould appearing on the walls in the summer.

Kate said has tried looking for another place to live but with rents still on the rise and only small numbers of landlords accepting rent supplement, she has had no luck.

Local Sinn Féin councillor Noeleen Reilly, who was contacted by Kate about her problem, said this is one of the worst cases she has seen and it has become a wide-scale problem.

“I’ve seen lots of it and people are just so afraid to speak out because there isn’t anywhere else for them to go. They don’t want to become homeless so many just put up with it,” she said.

Reilly also said many tenants are not aware of their rights when it comes to standards in the properties they rent.

In 2014, standards and repairs was the single biggest issue that housing charity Threshold dealt with. Gary Byrne, who is an assistant manager for the charity, told TheJournal.ie that tenants hoping to access rent supplement are “particularly vulnerable” as they have access to a much smaller share of the market.

“Sometimes tenants are fearful of reporting issues but the law does prevent landlords from penalising tenants for complaints,” he explained.

Threshold’s advice is to bring complaints to landlords and with issues like mould, to take their problem to their local authority, which has responsibility for enforcement.

Click [here](#) to read the article.



Appalling Damp, Mould in Family’s Home (United Kingdom)

A Southampton couple are fearing for their young children’s health because their home is riddled with black mould.

Mum-of-four Sophie Marsh and her partner Callum Brooks say that their two-bedroom flat in Lordshill has so much mould that all six of them have to sleep in the living room as the bedrooms have mould all over them.

All over the property black mould is on nearly every wall and ceiling and there is even a watery, tar-like substance dripping from the ceiling.

Callum said he has tried everything to get rid of the mould, including wiping walls and ceilings with bleach, opening the windows and cleaning the flat with anti-mould products.

“Everybody has a cough especially at night-time and our youngest one is struggling with bronchitis.”

Supporting their plea to be rehomed is Coxford Councillor Don Thomas, who said: “I find little innocent babies living in such appalling, damp conditions very upsetting, and unacceptable.”

“The landlord Hyde needs to re-home this family immediately into a dry, warm home while investigating what to do with this problem flat. It’s appalling.”

Click [here](#) to read the article.

New Report on Indoor Air Quality in EU Schools

SINPHONIE, an EU-funded research project on indoor air quality in EU schools, and its impact on children's health, has recently published its conclusions. Based on the evidence gathered, the Joint Research Centre and the partners developed guidelines for maintaining good air quality. They are expected to contribute to healthier school environments in Europe.

On school days, over 64 million European students and almost 4.5 million teachers are affected by the quality of the air they breathe inside their schools. Asthmatic people are particularly sensitive to poor air quality and pollutants.

Indoor air quality in school buildings is affected by outdoor air pollution, building characteristics and operation and management practices, including cleaning, maintenance, and ventilation. Paints, glues and other products for didactic purposes are also important sources of indoor pollution. The relevance of the state of the school buildings is also underlined. Based on the findings, the report states that in order to guarantee good air quality in schools, attention needs to be paid to ventilation and occupation densities.

Guidelines Specific guidelines were developed to promote a cost-effective preventive approach to indoor air quality control. They cover aspects such as cleaning, ventilation, heating, the use of equipment, as well as structural requirements for school buildings. They also contain specific tips for creating a healthy environment in classrooms, science labs, gyms, school canteens, locker rooms and recreational areas.

The guidelines are intended to complement already existing efforts at national and local level. They are directed at policy-makers and local authorities, who are able to undertake actions but they can also support construction companies, school staff, children and their parents in their aim to make our schools healthier.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

Click [here](#) to read the report—***Schools Indoor Pollution and Health Observatory Report in Europe***

Indoor Air Quality in EU Schools

Indoor Environmentalist Course (EMLab P&K and Ian Cull)

EMLab P&K, a TestAmerica company and the leading commercial indoor air quality (IAQ) laboratory in North America, partners again with Ian Cull of Indoor Sciences, Inc. to bring the **IAQA Indoor Environmentalist Course to the San Francisco Bay Area (February 24-25, 2015)**. The IAQA Indoor Environmentalist Course is a comprehensive two-day training course taught by Ian Cull of Indoor Sciences. Students completing the course will receive a certificate of completion from the IAQA, which is recognized for continuing education by organizations including ABIH, ACAC, and IICRC. Course topics include: contaminants, health effects, building science, HVAC, inspections, sampling, remediation, standards and more.

“We are excited to bring the IAQA Indoor Environmentalist Course to our clients in the San Francisco Bay Area,” said Dave Gallup, EMLab P&K’s General Manager and Co-Founder. “Our partnership with Ian Cull and Indoor Sciences aligns well with EMLab P&K’s goal to educate professionals and raise the standard of excellence throughout the environmental industry.”

Ian Cull, PE is an internationally-recognized speaker and consultant on topics related to indoor air quality, mold and building science. He is a Licensed Professional Engineer (P.E.) with nearly two decades of experience and has in-depth knowledge in all aspects of IAQ, HVAC, building science, sampling and remediation. He holds a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Engineering from one of the country’s top Environmental Engineering programs at University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. He is the author of 50 classes available through the Indoor Air Quality Association (IAQA) University.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Mike Holmes’ Renovation Advice* on page 5

Mike Holmes' Renovation Advice

It's a new year and you're starting to think about taking on a renovation. Be smart; make it a good investment.

Focus on renovations that help increase value, by improving the energy efficiency, durability, comfort and performance of your home. Some people think if they invest in a new kitchen or bathroom that will increase value the most. Not always the case. What if you get a leak or moisture intrusion, which then results in mould? To fix it, you might have to tear out that new kitchen or bathroom. That's a huge waste of money and materials.

My top advice is to work from the outside in. Take care of your roof, attic, windows, exterior and foundation first to make sure everything you do on the inside is protected. Some people think that's pointless, especially when it comes time to sell because people can't actually see those kinds of improvements. Or you'll get more bang for your buck by focusing on the lipstick and mascara — the finishes.

But that's like trying to sell a car with a weak battery, blown head gasket and faulty brakes by throwing on some new rims and a paint job. You might get someone to buy it, but only after some serious renegotiating on the selling price. You could even end up losing money on what the rims and paint cost you. Instead, if you present a solid package, you'll get your full investment, for the selling price you want.

A good start is a maintenance inspection to help prioritize what should be done first. For example, if you can see large cracks in your brick exterior, especially along windows, your bricks are spalling, flaking or the mortar is being eaten away. Getting this fixed should be at the top of your list. Otherwise, you risk moisture getting in behind the brick and into structure, rotting the substrate.

By investing in your building envelope first — that's everything that separates the inside of your home from the outside — it will pay off in energy efficiency, durability and protection.

Once you take care of the outside, you can start having fun with the inside. There are simple upgrades that homeowners should consider. For example, consider switching carpeting for engineered hardwood; it looks good, is durable and low maintenance, and can also help improve indoor air quality and reduce allergens.



Mike Holmes' Renovation Advice (continued)

We can also start looking at better, smarter interior products that work for any renovation, like quality drywall. Given the right environment and the right conditions, regular drywall will get mould. Luckily, there are drywall products that have been designed to protect against mould, moisture and mildew. Some drywall even absorbs and locks in volatile organic compounds, which helps create safer and healthier indoor environments.

Think about sub-floor systems that protect your final flooring choice. For example, insulated sub-floor panels with raised drainage and air-circulation channels allow air to move freely and dry out any moisture.

When these panels are placed over a concrete basement floor, not only do they help reduce surface moisture but also temperature fluctuations, which could lead to mould and mildew problems. They also provide a continual thermal break across the entire floor surface, meaning you get warmer floors and use less energy for heating.

Keep a record of every upgrade you make, especially the ones you can't see, like premium roofing materials, drywall and subflooring products or extra insulation. And keep a copy of all warranties.

A smart renovation is an investment. It should pay you back.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *New Jersey Funding for Lead Hazard* on page 6

Funding Needed for Lead Hazard Control in New Jersey

New Jersey's virtually depleted lead poisoning control fund would see an infusion of state dollars if some state lawmakers get their way.

"The health of our children is something that's very important, so I think we should make every effort that it's funded to the intent of the original legislation, at least to make an attempt to do that," said state Assemblywoman Mary Pat Angelini, R-Monmouth. "Any time we get away from the original intent of legislation, we get ourselves in trouble."

State Sen. Jeff Van Drew, D-Cape May, plans to hold a hearing on legislation (S-1279) that would pump \$10 million into the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund. An Asbury Park Press investigation published last week showed that the fund rarely received the funding it was due in the last decade.

Van Drew said "the lead problem in New Jersey is an important and a challenging issue. While we have heard from the (state Department of Community Affairs that) there has been a continued reduction in lead-poisoning cases, more than 5,000 children in the state with above-average levels is concerning."

Van Drew's comments came in response to the Press' inquiry, which found that more than \$50 million that was supposed to be earmarked for the lead poisoning fund had been diverted to pay routine state bills and salaries.

"I will be looking into this issue further and, in the near-term, expect to post legislation (for a hearing) that would provide \$10 million in supplemental funding to the Lead Hazard Control Assistance Fund," said Van Drew.

Lead poisoning is preventable. The New Jersey governor's office could pump up to \$8 million into the fund without any further action by lawmakers, under the fiscal 2015 appropriations law. But his office declined to comment on the depletion of fund — or any of the investigation's findings.

Click [here](#) to read the article.



Home Left with Extensive Water Damage after Bathtub Installation

A man from Grand Rapids, Michigan, says he hired a company out of the Detroit area to install a \$16,000 walk-in bathtub, only to have it leak and cause substantial damage to his home.

John Vanderstel wanted the tub because wife suffers from myotonic dystrophy, which causes muscle wasting and weakness. He also had the tub installed to help his 83-year-old father, who lives with them.

It was an expensive solution that quickly became problematic.

"Water was coming down from the walls and down from the ceiling and pocketing in the walls and bulging out," Vanderstel said.

The second bathroom, located directly below the one where the walk-in-bath was installed, has been an eyesore for nearly six months. The plaster is ripped off along the top border, and Vanderstel is concerned about the mold that could be growing underneath.

While America's Best Bath of Sterling Heights installed the tub, it's doing little to fix the problem, Vanderstel said. He told the FOX 17 Problem Solvers that the company sent someone out to evaluate the damage, but they only fixed a pipe.

Vanderstel said he's tried contacting America's Best Bath numerous times, and they won't answer or return his calls.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

See *Indoor Air Quality in India* on page 7

Indoor Air Quality in India

In recent years, increasing outdoor air pollution in cities has been causing concern. But there is also growing evidence that the air within our homes and buildings can be as hazardous. According to a 2014 report by the World Health Organization (WHO), household air pollution led to 4.3 million deaths globally in 2012. It says South-East Asia had the highest number of such deaths, the primary reasons being COPD, ischaemic heart disease (characterized by reduced blood supply to the heart), stroke and acute lower respiratory disease. The report adds that although women experienced higher exposure levels, the burden of illness due to indoor pollution was almost the same for both women and men.

There are many factors that influence indoor air quality: dampness, microbial pollution, chemicals and particulate matter released while smoking and cooking, as well as local outdoor factors like re-infiltration of stove emissions (especially important for chimney stoves), and pollution from nearby traffic.

Priya Ramachandran, associate professor in the department of pulmonary medicine, St John's National Academy of Health Sciences, Bengaluru, says: "Women are the most affected due to indoor air pollution. We see many women in their 50s and 60s affected by COPD. Many of them have husbands who smoke, but often do not bring this fact to light to the doctor. Hence, their condition is diagnosed late, resulting in respiratory failure."

Ramachandran says that even if a person is not exposed directly to tobacco smoke, which contains cancer-causing chemicals, there are chances she/he will be affected by the residue on upholstery and curtains. "For many women diagnosed with lung, stomach and bladder cancers, the probable cause is exposure to chemicals from tobacco smoke at home. Children exposed to it at a young age have small lungs and are prone to asthma," says Ramachandran.

According to WHO, dampness affects up to half of India's indoor environments and is a strong indicator of risk for asthma and respiratory illnesses. Seepage, inadequate insulation and unplanned air pathways, or cool parts of air-conditioning units, can result in surface temperatures below the ambient temperature, leading to excess moisture and dampness.



Indoor Air Quality in India (continued)

Excess moisture on indoor surfaces leads to growth of microbes, such as mould, fungi and bacteria, which emit spores, cells, fragments and volatile organic compounds. Microbial pollution is associated with respiratory symptoms, allergies, asthma and immunological reactions.

WHO lists certain chemicals like benzene, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide as hazardous chemicals commonly present in indoor air. Benzene is a genotoxic carcinogen. Its sources include smoke from burning coal and oil, cigarette smoke, wood-burning fireplaces, household products which contain petroleum-based chemicals, such as glues, paints and furniture wax. People who breathe in high levels of benzene may suffer from drowsiness, dizziness, rapid or irregular heartbeat, headaches and tremors.

Carbon monoxide is another indoor pollutant; the main sources are tobacco smoke and proximity to outdoor traffic. Clogged chimneys, wood-burning fireplaces, gas burners and other heaters, like portable space heaters, which are not properly maintained, could also vent carbon monoxide. Carbon monoxide binds to the haemoglobin in oxygen and reduces the body's ability to carry oxygen to the organs. Inhaling even low levels can cause headache, nausea, dizziness and weakness.

Phthalates, a group of chemicals used in vinyl flooring, air fresheners and personal care products like soaps, shampoos and nail polish too have an effect. These chemicals can leach out and be ingested, inhaled or absorbed through the skin.

The [article](#) includes some steps you can take to improve indoor air quality.

See *Diesel Exhaust Experiments* on page 8

USC and UCLA Conducted Diesel Exhaust Experiments on Children

A government watchdog group has obtained documents detailing how EPA-backed research exposed children as young as 10 to deadly air pollutants without disclosing the full risks of the substances.

Government watchdogs say these EPA-backed studies could violate California state and federal law, because children were exposed to diesel exhaust in experiments with no health benefits to the subjects.

Between 2003 and 2010, the EPA backed experiments done at the University of Southern California and the University of California, Los Angeles that exposed children aged 10 to 15 to diesel exhaust — an air pollutant which the EPA and the California Air Resources Board says has no safe exposure limit.

“Compounding the basic villainy of the experimentation itself,” Schnare added, “is that the USC/UCLA researchers failed to warn the parents and children how dangerous EPA and CARB had determined diesel exhaust to be. So there was no informed consent as required by law.”

Researchers sprayed diesel exhaust up the noses of 20 children to see what happened to them after being exposed to the substance. But these experiments have no direct health benefits to the study “except for learning how well your body can cope with pollution,” according to an application for one of the experiments.

Schnare said these experiments violated the Nuremberg Code, which has been adopted in California and federal regulations as the Common Rule. In California, violating medical experimentation laws can result in fines and/or imprisonment.

Click [here](#) to read the article.

USC and UCLA Conducted Diesel Exhaust Experiments on Children

How to Handle Mold Problems in North Carolina

Maria Strickland said when she and her 2-year-old son moved into their apartment in Greensboro in November, she saw no sign of mold.

“If the mold’s been painted over freshly, then you’re not going to see it,” she said.

But after about a month, she said she started to visibly notice mold and to feel health effects she said are related to it.

Strickland called the Greensboro Housing Coalition, who yesterday was able to take her case to housing court and win. Now, Strickland will be able to move out of her apartment at The Arbors with no penalty for breaking her lease.

The [article](#) includes additional tips for handling mold problems in North Carolina.

Quick Links:

Website: <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

Health Effects:
<http://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/health-effects>

Position Statement:
<http://www.globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/GIHN-position-statement>

Next Newsletter: March 1, 2015

Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments