

GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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Proposed Rules Regarding Formaldehyde

In response to the "Formaldehyde Standards for Composite Wood Products Act" that was signed into law, the EPA has proposed two rules aimed at protecting the public from the risks associated with exposure to formaldehyde. The first proposal would implement formaldehyde emission standards under TSCA Title VI, and would apply to hardwood plywood, medium-density fiberboard, particleboard, and finished goods containing these products that are sold, supplied, offered for sale, or manufactured (including imported) in the United States.

The second proposal would establish a framework for a third-party certification program to ensure that composite wood panel producers comply with the formaldehyde emission limits established under TSCA Title VI.

Comments must be received by August 9, 2013.

Read the [press release](#) and proposed rules on [formaldehyde emissions](#) and [third-party certification](#).

How to Identify Hidden Mold and Other IAQ Problems

We receive many requests asking how to inspect properties before renting or buying, so we are posting this 2011 article by Connie Morbach, M.S., CHMM, CIE. Click [here](#) to read the entire article.

Buying or renting an apartment, office or condominium in a multistory building presents challenges beyond the structural and indoor air quality issues that are anticipated when purchasing a single-family dwelling. Most prospective home buyers understand the importance of hiring an independent third-party home inspector before the purchase of a house. If a buyer has previously experienced illnesses associated with mold, bacteria, and other contaminants in water damaged buildings (WBD's), a mold assessment is often requested in addition to the home inspection and seller's disclosure statement. Although the same types of due diligence can be requested for multi-story apartments and condominiums, numerous complexities associated with these multi-family dwellings diminish the likelihood of gathering accurate information.

Identifying issues that could negatively impact indoor air quality can be especially troublesome in rental properties due to policies, practices, and procedures that hinder accountability. Some of these inherent issues include frequent tenant turnover, less stringent disclosure requirements, tenant abuse, poor maintenance, low quality building materials, property management by outside contractors, bylaws of home owners associations, and delayed or unreported damages. Thoroughness and persistence are required prior to signing a rental agreement. Potential health hazards include mold, pesticides, animal and pest allergens, lead, and asbestos, as well as volatile organic compounds from paint cleaning products, carpeting, and building materials.

How to Spot the Telltale Signs of Concealed Damage

Questions to Ask

See *Improve Indoor Air Quality* on page 2

How Can We Improve Indoor Air Quality (European Environment Agency)

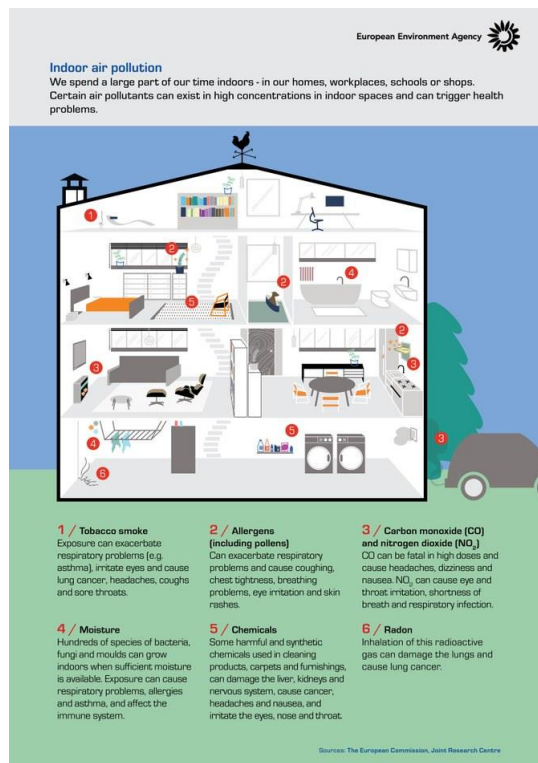
Many of us might spend up to 90 % of our day indoors — at home, work or school. The quality of the air we breathe indoors also has a direct impact on our health. What determines indoor air quality? Is there any difference between outdoor and indoor air pollutants? How can we improve indoor air quality?

It may come as a surprise to many of us that the air in an urban street with average traffic might actually be cleaner than the air in your living room. Recent studies indicate that some harmful air pollutants can exist in higher concentrations in indoor spaces than outdoors. In the past, indoor air pollution received significantly less attention than outdoor air pollution, especially outdoor air pollution from industrial and transport emissions. However, in recent years the threats posed by exposure to indoor air pollution have become more apparent.

Imagine a newly painted house, decorated with new furniture... Or a workplace filled with a heavy smell of cleaning products... The quality of air in our homes, work places or other public spaces varies considerably, depending on the material used to build it, to clean it, and the purpose of the room, as well as the way we use and ventilate it.

Most outdoor pollutants penetrate into our homes, where we spend most of our time. The quality of indoor air is affected by many other factors, including cooking, wood stoves, burning candles or incense, the use of consumer products like waxes and polishes for cleaning surfaces, building materials like formaldehyde in plywood, and flame retardants in many materials. Then there is also radon coming from soils and building materials.'

European countries are trying to tackle some of these sources of indoor air pollution. According to Labret, 'we are trying to substitute more toxic substances with less toxic substances or to find processes that reduce emissions, as in the case of formaldehyde emissions from plywood. Another example can be seen with the reduction of certain radon-emitting materials used in wall construction.



How Can We Improve Indoor Air Quality (European Environment Agency)...cont'd

As in the case of outdoor pollutants, the impacts of indoor air pollutants are not limited to our health only. They also come with high economic costs. Exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in EU workplaces alone is estimated at over EUR 1.3 billion in direct medical costs, and over EUR 1.1 billion in indirect costs linked to productivity losses in 2008.

Passing laws is not the only way to improve the quality of the air we breathe; we can all take steps to control and reduce airborne particles and chemicals in indoor spaces.

Small actions such as ventilating enclosed spaces can help improve the quality of the air around us. But some of our well-intended actions might actually have adverse effects. Labret suggests: 'We should ventilate, but we should not over ventilate as this is a substantial loss of energy. It leads to more heating and use of fossil fuels, and consequently means more air pollution. We should think of it as making more sensible use of our resources in general.'

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

See *Indoor Air Particles and Movement* on page 3

Researcher Studies Indoor Air Particles and Movement

Most people worry about the quality of the air they breathe outdoors, while giving little thought to the contaminants that may be circulating in their own homes.

Yet, with only a few exceptions, such as certain urban environments, "outdoor air is cleaner than indoor air," says Andrea R. Ferro, an associate professor in civil and environmental engineering at Clarkson University.

"People spend most of their time indoors or in transit--only about 5 percent of peoples' time in the United States is spent outdoors--and indoor pollutants emissions are 1,000 times more likely to be inhaled than outdoor emissions," she adds.

These include particles with potential health consequences, such as house dust, animal dander, pesticide residues from indoor applications or tracked in from the outside, flame retardants from various household products, phthalates, which are substances used in plastics to make them flexible, bacteria and viruses. Additionally, there also are such particles as skin cells, textiles or minerals brought in from outside dirt.

In short, "there are lots of things in there," Ferro says.

Ferro is studying particle re-suspension, that is, the makeup of particles that have landed on indoor surfaces, then later detached--by a breeze, or cleaning, or even foot traffic--to reenter the indoor air stream. "We are looking at how these particles move in an indoor setting," she says.

Most importantly, "we are developing tools to predict exposure based on [indoor] environmental conditions, so you can predict what they can be," she says.

The data they gather ultimately could provide insights into developing new materials for indoor surfaces, such as flooring, and improving other systems that are involved, such as ventilation.

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



Army housing in U.K.

Army Housing in U.K. Not Fit for Heroes

Mould grows around the windows, creeping on to the walls of badly cracked plaster.

Ceilings are spattered with ugly brown damp patches. On the floor, worn old carpets are so frayed they don't reach the skirting boards.

In one kitchen, sheeting is taped over what are feared to be asbestos panels. In another an electric socket hangs off the wall with bare wires in reach of little fingers.

These are homes considered fit for war heroes and their families.

And a Sunday Mirror investigation into the dire state of service housing today blows apart the Government's claim to be caring for Forces' families through the Military Covenant.

And a new report by the Army Families Foundation found the state of their homes was the top concern for service households - with two in five worried about repairs and maintenance.

The report said: "Mould continues to cause distress to many."

Mould was rampant in the houses we visited at Colchester Garrison in Essex, home to 16 Air Assault Brigade.

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

Tribute to Melinda Ballard

It would take a book to adequately portray Melinda's life and accomplishments, but I will share a few thoughts in this tribute. Melinda's husband approved this tribute.

Melinda never met a stranger. She had a rare gift of being able to easily adapt to everyone she encountered...whether by phone or in person. She was a fierce fighter for justice and had no tolerance for unethical attorneys or corporations who did not honor their contracts.

She began her professional career in New York where she was responsible for advertising and promotion for several flagship brands. In 1984, she founded her own ad agency and opened offices in New York and San Francisco and several overseas satellite offices and handled many designers and major corporations.

Melinda was a pioneer in the mold community, and her family's 1998 mold story in Texas was well-known. She had many interests including fashion, clothing design, architecture, banking and animal rights.

Melinda was the President of Policyholders of America, and she spent countless hours over the years helping homeowners get paid for their claims. She had mastered the art of doing battle with insurance companies, and they would shudder when she became involved with a claim.

I received many beautiful comments about Melinda from GIHN members and others who knew her. Some of the common words I hear to describe Melinda are strength, tenacity, courage, quick wit, fighting spirit, wisdom, sense of humor, warrior, generous and giving.

One of Melinda's friends posted a very poignant message about Melinda on her Facebook page, and his words were shared during Melinda's memorial service. I am including his heartfelt message here:

**Melinda was a true warrior queen.
No one loved war as much as she;
it was her native clime.**

**She had all the warrior virtues--honor, justice, self-sacrifice, courage, and above all, a warrior spine.
It shone from her eyes
and formed her life and her passing.**



Melinda Ballard

Tribute to Melinda Ballard (cont'd)

The following poem was read during Melinda's memorial service. Melinda gave freely of her time and energy to many people, and this poem reflects her generous and giving nature.

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten. Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough. Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

Melinda's legacy will live on, and she will not be forgotten. May she rest in peace.

See *Curious Case of Toxic Mold* on page 5

Curious Case of Toxic Mold

Four women work together in a small building in Madison. They begin to behave strangely, developing nosebleeds and coughs, complaining of constant exhaustion. They appear to forget words, at times seeming to lose track mid-sentence.

They begin to blanket doctors' offices. Three of the women have gall bladder surgery the same year. One of them, Sandra Payne, says she went to the doctor 26 times in her final year in the office. Two are eventually diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

"It was really weird, we all just kept getting sick," Payne said recently. "It was constant."

"Our tongues would be terribly coated in that office and we'd discuss that," says Sallie Wagner.

"We were saying, 'What is wrong with us?' Every day I'd say that I feel like I was getting the flu," said Payne. "On the weekend, we'd feel better."

Sallie Wagner used to know people all over town. As director of the Chamber of Commerce, she spent 15 years selling the City of Madison. Payne was her assistant. "I loved my job," said Wagner.

But their lives began to fall apart as a spiral of increasingly bizarre physical complaints would lead to marital separation, social isolation and job loss. In the end, the entire roster of Chamber employees would end up suing the small city they had worked to promote.

It wasn't until near the end of 2006, Wagner says, that she first stopped and took notice of how strange her complaints were. She said her veins looked -- visually appeared -- swollen. She said she began to feel muscle twitches and would ask her husband to touch her to see if the tremors were real.

"Personalities were changing," says Payne.

In 2007, a tip from a neighbor led the women to consider the Chamber office itself as the source of their ailments. They looked and they found blackish green mold in the walls, in the vents and under the old historic building. In June of that year, they refused to enter the building again, opting to work from home.



*Toxic mold case against City of Madison
Chamber of Commerce*

Curious Case of Toxic Mold (cont'd)

One year later, the women sued the city and the Chamber. Madison owns the office building on Main Street and had rented it to the Chamber.

Wagner was fired by the Chamber for "job performance" in 2008. She also separated from her husband. "He was like everybody, thought we were crazy," she said. Payne also lost her position. She says her own children didn't believe her. Wagner says her family doctor instead diagnosed her as depressed, prescribed pills.

What to make of stories like this? Payne says that toward the end of their tenure in the building that Wagner's joints were so swollen she could no longer straighten out her legs. Some days she would walk with her knees bent as though seated, waddling forward. Payne says she began to find Wagner in her office, head down on the desk, unable to move. They had a repeated practice, where she would wipe down Wagner's face with damp paper towels to revive her.

Then two things happened. More and more doctors' reports came back showing something was wrong with his wife's health. Second, Madison firefighters announced they were being made sick by a moldy fire hall and requested they be given a mobile home.

Madison tore down the moldy fire station and built a new one for \$1.4 million. The Chamber building is still in use. That worries them.

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

See *Yakima Family..house full of mold* on page 6

Yakima Family Living in a House Full of Mold

A woman in Yakima is living in a house full of mold. And she claims it's making her one-year-old sick.

Dark mold covers Theresa Tervree's bathroom walls, kitchen walls and her kid's bedroom.

Mom of two, Theresa says the smell is worse than the sight.

"You can still smell the smell," said Theresa. "That's what my kids are sleeping in."

And worse than the smell is the potentially dangerous health effects.

Theresa's one-year-old is now forced to do a breathing treatment twice a day, every day.

Theresa says her landlord put up a temporary solution. Plastic covers the mold on the ceiling. She says her landlord refuses to clean or fix the root of the problem and told her to move. But, Theresa and her family can't afford it.

Theresa says the Yakima Housing Authority would help with the move, but only if Theresa could show them an eviction notice or proof the house is uninhabitable. Theresa is certain an inspection would be proof enough, but there is no money for that either.

After several attempts, the landlord eventually called us back. She says she will set up an appointment with Theresa to fix the problem.

The Yakima Landlord Association says it is the landlord's responsibility. If the landlord doesn't make the repairs, we're told Theresa would have to seek legal council.

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



Yakima family living in house full of mold

Courthouse Flooding Update

Results of the air quality test to measure mold, mildew or other moisture-related problems at the [Fort Lauderdale federal courthouse](#) are due any day, according to a recent letter from John Smith, regional commissioner with the General Services Administration.

The mold tests were done after the courthouse suffered severe water leaks and flooding during a heavy rain on May 2.

Chief Judge Donald Graham sent a letter to the GSA, demanding attention to the emergency. He also shipped video of the leaks to local TV stations, showing water streaming into courtrooms, hallways and library areas.

"[T]he current conditions are beyond serious and, frankly, a contract award expected to be made in July and repairs to be completed by February 2014 provide little comfort," Graham wrote. "Had proper repairs been undertaken last year when GSA was notified by Chief Judge Moreno, the situation would already be remedied and our judges, court personnel and the public would not have had to endure another monsoon season inside the courthouse."

Quick Links:

Website: <http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

Members:
<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/members.html>

Position Statement:
http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/files/GIHN_position_statement_Revised_12_17_2012.pdf

[Next Newsletter: August 1, 2013](#)

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