

# GLOBAL INDOOR HEALTH NETWORK

"WORKING TOGETHER FOR HEALTHY INDOOR ENVIRONMENTS"

<http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com>

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## Mold in 28 Classrooms; Emergency Remediation Underway

One week before the first day of the new school year, Bethlehem Area School District officials are scrambling to fix a suspected mold problem discovered at East Hills Middle School (in Pennsylvania).

On August 13, suspected mold growth turned up on hard surfaces, affecting "approximately 28 classrooms" in the middle school.

While investigating, the district's facilities department and its engineering firm found high levels of humidity throughout the east wing of the school.

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

## Millions of Families in Danger Due to Damp, Leaks and Negligent Landlords

Millions of people living in privately-rented homes (in the U.K.) are suffering from damp, condensation and leaky roofs because landlords are unable – or unwilling – to intervene, new figures suggest.

As many as 2.8 million tenants have condensation issues, 2.5 million complain of damp, while 1.2million have leaky roofs and windows, according to a study.

Housing charities say one in four renters have asked for repairs without having them fulfilled – potentially putting millions of families' health at risk.

The findings come from what has been described as the largest survey of private renters, revealing declining standards as the number of tenants rises.

Some 9 million people are now believed to be privately renting homes in England, including 1.3 million families with children.

Yet as many as one in three privately-let homes in the country fail to meet the government's Decent Homes Standard for England.

Housing charity Shelter told Metro the latest findings were 'shocking' and showed how much better landlords must perform.

'It's shocking to think that so many people are living in homes that are damp, cold and potentially dangerous.

'With more people renting for longer, we urgently need to improve the condition of homes in the private sector.'

The two organisations have set a target of improving one million privately-rented homes during the next five years.

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

See *New Laws on Tobacco and Smoking* on page 2

## UAE: New Laws on Tobacco and Smoking

The Ministry of Health has announced the executive regulations of the anti-tobacco federal law, which approved by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, in the Cabinet's Resolution No 24 issued on 21 July, 2013.

The said resolution will come into effect six months from the date of its issuance. The said regulations are part of the government's efforts to establish an effective national anti-tobacco strategy to protect public health.

**The upcoming anti-tobacco law will ban smoking in private vehicles if a child younger than 12 is present in the car.** The said ban aims to protect children from being exposed to cigarette smoke, and is part of the said executive regulations.

The law also aims to reduce smoking among youth. A study carried out in Abu Dhabi showed that 28 percent of children aged 15 and younger, are smokers, while 30 percent of people aged 18 and are smokers.

### Advertising

**The law bans any content that advertises tobacco products, such as newspaper advertisements, TV commercials and animations.**

It also bans importing tobacco products that are not line with technical standards set by the UAE, and any violations regarding such imports can lead to a one year prison sentence and a fine ranging from Dh100,000 to Dh1 million, in addition to the confiscation of products.

The law also provides specifications on the packaging of tobacco products.

**All products must now display a large warning label on the front to raise awareness on the dangers of tobacco, and not to mislead them. Violators will be fined Dh100,000 to Dh1 million, and the fines can be doubled if the offence is repeated.**

Puerto Rico and six states in the U.S. have also passed laws that ban smoking in cars when children are present. Those states include Arkansas, California, Louisiana, Maine, Oregon and Utah.

Click [here](#) to get the details.

## UAE: New Laws on Tobacco and Smoking (continued)

Tobacco products cannot be displayed near items marketed for children, or sportswear, health, food and electronic products. Tobacco products are also forbidden to be sold in locations that are 100 metres away from places of worship, and 15 metres away from kindergartens, schools, universities and colleges.

### Shisha cafes

Shisha cafes will also have to be at least 150 metres away from residential areas. The regulations also specify that these cafes working hours will be from 10am to midnight. Shishas will not be served to customers younger than 18 years of age, and the cafes will be forbidden from delivering shishas to apartments, the paper said.

### Growing, producing tobacco

**Growing or producing tobacco for commercial purposes will also be forbidden**, and current manufacturing plants have been given a grace period of 10 years to sort out their situation, and tobacco farms have been given a two-year grace period.

The UAE ratified the World Health Organisation's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), the first international treaty negotiated under the auspices of WHO, in November 2005.

The UAE anti-tobacco law was drafted by the Ministry of Health in 2006. In December 2009, the UAE issued its own federal anti-tobacco law.

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

See *Millions to Repair Mouldy Schools* on page 3

## Millions to Repair Mouldy Schools— A Drop in the Bucket? (Finland)

The Finance Ministry's supplementary state budget plan published on Friday include some 35 million euros to help municipalities to combat mildew in public buildings. **Experts say that this level of funding is not enough to make a serious dent in the problem nationally.**

More than 1,000 Finnish schools suffer from mould problems, estimates the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities. The Environment Ministry official in charge of mildew correction, Juhani Pirinen, agrees with that figure.

This means that some 150,000 pupils and school staff members are exposed to poor interior air quality, which can seriously affect health. Mould is also found in many other public buildings, including daycare centres and health clinics.

The state funds earmarked for dealing with mildew problems in the supplementary budget will be shared among these three types of municipal buildings. However, probably only about one fifth of each renovation bill will be footed by the central government, says Pirinen. Local authorities will have to cough up the rest themselves.

"We've calculated that for school repairs alone, we need at least 200 million euros from the state to even get off to a reasonable start," says Esko Korhonen, a facilities expert at the Association of Finnish Local and Regional Authorities.

"At the moment, the cost of needed school repairs is somewhere around a billion euros. And counting all municipal buildings, the figure climbs to five billion.

The school's staff and pupils suffer from headaches, breathing difficulties and watering eyes, which are attributed to mould in the air. Headmaster Timo Rönqvist says that last winter some students fainted in class. Each autumn when the school community returns from summer holiday, there are immediate reports of health symptoms suddenly returning.

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



## Mike Holmes Calls for Flood-Affected Homes to be Torn Down

The flood-devastated town of High River is getting some high-profile help.

It's been two months since the June flood, but thousands are still out of their homes—which the government has been telling residents not to tear down.

"It drives you crazy. Purgatory is how I describe it," says resident Lisa Szabon-Smith. "This is hard. We're expecting our first child and we're trying to focus on the home we were going to bring him to, [but] every time we ask the government questions we're patronized."

Fortunately, homeowners now have an ally in the man who has made a career rescuing people from damaged homes—Mike Holmes.

**"When the water has exceeded into the first floor of the home, that home should come down," says the HGTV host. "There is no fixing that. I don't care what anyone says, you can't fix it."**

He adds that starting over is the only option, for some badly-damaged homes.

**"Take it down, build it smarter. If you try and fix it, you're going to have problems."**

Affected residents are requesting a lump sum payment from the government, so they have the financial freedom to make a decision about the future of their homes.

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

See *Air Pollution Indoors* on page 4

## Air Pollution Can be Indoors Too

Air pollution is often associated with heavily trafficked highways or industrial areas home to manufacturing plants. But air pollution can occur anywhere, including inside your house or apartment.

Though it can be easy to recognize outdoor air pollution, indoor air pollution is not always so easily identifiable. But understanding indoor air pollution can help people, whether they live in a private home or an apartment, improve the air quality in their homes.

What causes indoor air pollution? Indoor air pollution can be the result of many things, including biological contaminants (mold and mildew), tobacco smoke, radon, and household chemicals. The concentration of some pollutants can increase when the temperature indoors is high or if humidity levels indoors are high. Poor ventilation may also contribute to poor indoor air quality.

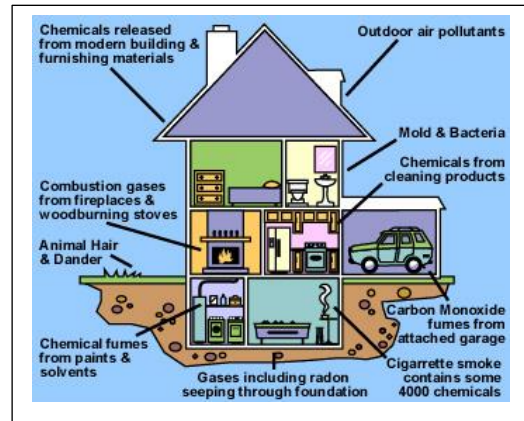
Indoor air pollutants can cause immediate problems or problems down the road. The immediate effects, which can include irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, headaches, dizziness and fatigue, are typically short-term and can be treated, oftentimes by removing the person's exposure to the source of the pollution. Symptoms of some diseases, including asthma, may also appear shortly after exposure.

**Long-term effects of indoor air pollution may show up years after initial exposure or after prolonged exposure. Respiratory disease, cancer and even heart disease may result from prolonged exposure or not appear until years after initial exposure.**

Homeowners and apartment dwellers can take steps to improve the quality of the air inside their homes. Eliminating the sources of the pollution or reducing its emissions is a great place to start.

Limiting the types and amount of household chemicals, such as cleaners, air fresheners, fingernail polish remover, perfume and other cosmetics can also help to decrease of pollution within the home. Furnishings made with natural fibers can also help, as they have less tendency to off gas.

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



## Flood, Mold Leave Chapel Hill Residents in Limbo

If it weren't for the dark windows and storage pods in the parking lot, life at the Airport Gardens Apartments would have seemed normal last week.

Two women leaned against a wall in the afternoon sun, chatting as a group of young children played with a turtle they had found in the grass. A pair of boys rode their bikes along the sidewalk.

The rain that seriously damaged many low-lying Chapel Hill and Carrboro homes June 30 also flooded 18 apartments at the town-owned public housing complex on Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Airport Gardens' 26 units sit on a hill overlooking Hillsborough Street and the Bolin Creek Greenway. The Chapel Hill Police Department is across the street. The complex had a new drainage system and retaining wall installed in the late 1990s, town Housing Director Tina Vaughn said.

"The water came so fast and so high, the drainage system couldn't handle it," she said.

In the days that followed, cleanup crews also found mold growing inside some of the walls.

Residents did not want to be identified last week but said they are worried how long it will take for life to return to normal. One woman said residents have since contacted the housing department, the mayor and others trying to get answers.

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

See *U.S. Chamber Threatens Justice* on page 5



## U.S. Chamber Threatens Justice for Dying Asbestos Cancer Victims

Front groups working on behalf of corporations that profited from asbestos, covered-up the dangers of the product, and knowingly killed thousands of Americans have convinced Ohio lawmakers to pass a bill that grants unprecedented legal protections to the asbestos industry. **This is part of a nationwide campaign led by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. The goal is to allow asbestos corporations to deny accountability and delay justice until asbestos cancer victims die.**

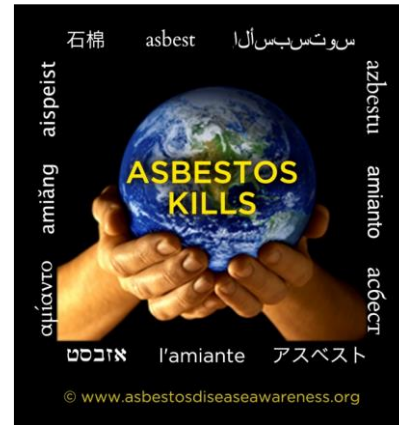
The asbestos industry, made up of corporations like Honeywell, Koch Industries, and ExxonMobil, is one of the major corporate financiers of ALEC and the U.S. Chamber. **For years, these two corporate front groups have waged a campaign to let asbestos corporations and their insurers off-the-hook for killing American workers and their families. Behind-the-scenes they have orchestrated efforts to vilify cancer victims, mislead the public with propaganda and limit accountability through legislation.** Their newest tactic is to take advantage of the asbestos bankruptcy trust system.

“Asbestos kills over 10,000 Americans every year. It is appalling that the corporations responsible for this tragedy want to pass the buck to victims and taxpayers,” said American Association for Justice (AAJ) President Mary Alice McLarty. “The asbestos industry should be held accountable for the lives they destroyed, not granted access to state and federal lawmakers through ALEC and the U.S. Chamber.”

The campaign has a multi-pronged approach focusing on the federal, state, and judicial levels. On the state level, ALEC hands model legislation to local elected-officials while the U.S. Chamber funds state efforts and backs federal proposals. Despite bipartisan opposition, the Ohio bill, HB 380, passed out of the Senate yesterday. If Governor Kasich does not veto this legislation, Ohio will become the first state to rubber stamp this effort. Other states could follow. Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas and West Virginia have already seen versions of this legislation.

“The last thing the asbestos industry deserves is a handout,” commented McLarty. “Elected officials should instead protect cancer victims’ rights.”

Click [here](#) to read this article from December 6, 2012.



*The asbestos industry should be held accountable for the lives they destroyed, NOT granted access to state and federal lawmakers through ALEC and the U.S Chamber.*

## Are Our School Buildings Harming our Students?

*Every summer, we hear many stories about mold problems in schools. Some of these problems could be avoided if schools would keep the air conditioning turned on. Other problems are due to maintenance issues, leaks, flooding, etc. Here's a brief excerpt of a recent article on this topic:*

With back-to-school time in full swing, each school day, 55 million children and 7 million adults -- 20 percent of the total U.S. population and 98 percent of all children -- will spend their days inside school buildings. As our children head back to the classroom, there are efforts to offer our children healthier foods and more exercise, along with asking for more rigorous testing. Yet, despite our best efforts, we know that schools -- the very buildings they step into every day -- are working against them.

Many of our kids are returning to unhealthy school environments. Unfortunately, too many of our nation's 130,000 public and private schools are "unhealthy" buildings that can harm their health and hinder learning. Today, clear and convincing research shows that improving specific factors such as school indoor environmental quality improves attendance, academic performance, and productivity.

This [article](#) refers to the 1995 GAO report (about the condition of America's schools) which is available on the GIHN website under "Government Agencies."

See *Toxic Effects of Air Fresheners* on page 6

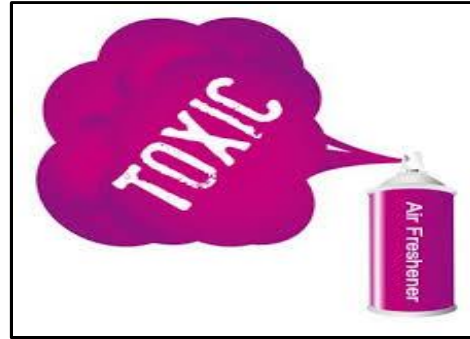
## Toxic Effects of Commercial Air Fresheners

*The following abstract is from a study done in 1997. It's an important study because employees and consumers are increasingly being subjected to businesses that use commercial air fresheners. Here's the abstract:*

To evaluate whether emissions of a commercial air freshener produced acute toxic effects in a mammalian species, the authors allowed male Swiss-Webster mice to breathe the emissions of one commercial-brand solid air freshener for 1 h. Sensory irritation and pulmonary irritation were evaluated with the ASTM-E-981 test. A computerized version of this test measured the duration of the break at the end of inspiration and the duration of the pause at the end of expiration--two parameters subject to alteration via respiratory effects of airborne toxins. Measurements of expiratory flow velocity indicated changes in airflow limitation. The authors then subjected mice to a functional observational battery, the purpose of which was to probe for changes in nervous system function.

Emissions of this air freshener at several concentrations (including concentrations to which many individuals are actually exposed) caused increases in sensory and pulmonary irritation, decreases in airflow velocity, and abnormalities of behavior measured by the functional observational battery score. The test atmosphere was subjected to gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy, and the authors noted the presence of chemicals with known irritant and neurotoxic properties. The Material Safety Data Sheet for the air freshener indicated that there was a potential for toxic effects in humans. The air freshener used in the study did not diminish the effect of other pollutants tested in combination. The results demonstrated that the air freshener may have actually exacerbated indoor air pollution via addition of toxic chemicals to the atmosphere.

Click [here](#) for the link to the abstract.



## Patients and Staff at VA Medical Center are Relocated after Mold is Found

Mold found in air-conditioning units in the Martinsburg Veterans Affairs Medical Center's domiciliary prompted the hospital to relocate patients and staff last week, officials said Monday.

The domiciliary was closed Friday after safety officials at the hospital found "common" mold in the fan coils of the air conditioners, the medical center said.

"During the cleanup process, the delivery of care to our patients and the medical center's daily operational activities will not be interrupted," Ann R. Brown, medical center director, said in a news release.

"We are making every effort to ensure this process is as smooth and expeditious as possible, so that our veterans can move back into their rooms as quickly as possible."

The mold removal, which began Saturday, is expected to take about 60 days, and the affected areas have been restricted to authorized construction personnel.

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

### 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](http://globalindoorhealthnetwork.com/files/GIHN_position_statement_Revised_12_17_2012.pdf)

**Next Newsletter: October 1, 2013**

**Working Together for Healthy Indoor Environments**