



## FAQ - What Does Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Mean?

Indoor air quality (IAQ) refers to the quality of the air inside buildings as represented by concentrations of pollutants and thermal (temperature and relative humidity) conditions that affect the health, comfort, and performance of occupants and processes.

Symptoms and signs of poor indoor air quality may include irritation of eyes, nose and throat, respiratory infections and coughs, wheezing, asthma, mental fatigue and poor concentration, headache and nausea or dizziness. These signs will not be present in all employees but will be more prevalent in some building users, as a group, when compared with others. The symptoms and signs may disappear, or may be reduced in intensity, when an affected person leaves the building.

Modern industries, such as microelectronics, aerospace and health care facilities, now operate in stringent clean room conditions, while others, such as food preparation and pharmaceuticals, require increasingly demanding air quality standards.

### Factors that affect the quality of indoor air may include the following:

#### Chemical contaminants from outdoor sources:

Outdoor air that enters a building can also be a source of indoor pollution. Pollutants from motor vehicle exhausts, plumbing vents and building exhausts can enter the building through poorly located air vents, windows and other openings. Combustion by-products can also enter a building from a nearby garage.

#### Chemical contaminants from indoor sources:

Most indoor air pollution comes from sources inside the building. For example, adhesives, upholstery, carpeting, copy machines, manufactured wood products, cleaning agents and pesticides may emit volatile organic compounds. Environmental tobacco smoke and combustion products from stoves, fireplaces, engines and non-vented space heaters can all put chemical contaminants into the air.

#### Biological contaminants:

Biological contaminants include pollen, bacteria, viruses, and moulds. These contaminants can breed in stagnant water that has accumulated in humidifiers, drain pans, and ducts or where water has collected on ceiling tiles, insulation, or carpet.

#### Inadequate ventilation:

Reduced ventilation rates have been found in many cases to be inadequate to maintain the health and comfort of building occupants.

**Contact OHSS to discuss the IAQ and Thermal Comfort surveys to suit your requirements and environment.**

#### OHSS Safety Consultants

Unit 2 Beat Centre, Stephenstown Industrial Estate · Balbriggan · Co. Dublin  
Tel: 01 6905907 · Fax: 01 8020439  
[info@ohss.ie](mailto:info@ohss.ie) · [www.ohss.ie](http://www.ohss.ie)

