

Information here is from the “Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Update,” June 2008.






The IAQ TfS Program is a comprehensive resource to help schools maintain a healthy environment in school buildings by identifying, correcting, and preventing IAQ problems. Learn more about the IAQ TfS Program at www.epa.gov/iaq/schools. If you would like more information about any of the topics discussed in this update or would like to subscribe to EPA’s IAQ TfS updates, please send an e-mail to IAQTfSConnector@cadmusgroup.com with 'Subscribe' in the subject line.

Prepare Your Facility for Summer... a Guest Feature from the Southeast Rebuild Collaborative (SRC).

There are several issues to consider when shutting down a building during a vacation period — two of the most important being energy waste reduction and protection of the indoor environment. These two issues be considered simultaneously. On one hand, significant savings can be achieved by turning everything off. On the other, you could wind up creating added costs by not monitoring and adjusting for indoor temperature and humidity.

Fluctuations in the indoor environment can have a negative effect on both the building itself in the form of mold and dust mites, as well as on the building contents (such, files, sensitive musical instruments, or pieces of artwork. For example, a good guide for summer vacation periods would be to allow room spaces to stay within the range of 80-85°F while maintaining a relative humidity level under 65%. This will help reduce energy waste as well as avoid problems with the building its contents. Each facility manager should determine the operating parameters for their facilities in meeting the “less than 65% RH” threshold.

Here are some strategies for reducing energy waste during periods of non-occupancy:

-  Relocate activities that occur in the summer to facilities without a centralized HVAC system so that smaller cooling systems could provide the needed air conditioning.
-  Eliminate unnecessary plug loads by unplugging appliances such as small refrigerators and using power strips to turn off electricity to small appliances and computers.
-  Adjust HVAC systems for partial loading conditions to allow for maximum dehumidification and reduced energy needs during unoccupied periods in the hot and humid season. Use data loggers or humidistats to monitor space conditions.
-  Obtain the support of top level management to promote the vacation shutdown program.
-  The opportunities for partial or full shutdown of a building vary by the building type, use, and season. For more information on vacation shutdown, download a full Webinar presentation given by the Southeast Rebuild Collaborative or visit the past IAQ TfS Web Conference: "Implementing IAQ TfS: Proper Building Maintenance for Summer Months".

IAQ Summer Checklist

School is out, but heat and humidity are in – follow these tips to ensure that the fall session begins with quality indoor air.

- ✓ Check windows and doors for breaks and air leaks.
- ✓ If you live in a humid climate, you may need to keep ventilation running and monitor humidity levels within the building. Learn more about controlling humidity indoors.
- ✓ Ensure cleaned carpets are thoroughly dried. Learn about the formula for mold growth.
- ✓ Review the repairs and equipment purchases occurring over the summer to be sure they align with your IAQ management plan. Learn more about durable, high-efficiency equipment that can help improve your school's IAQ.
- ✓ Proper choice of cleaners, adhesives, paints, pesticides, solvents, carpeting, equipment, and furnishings can reduce the chemical fumes from these products.
- ✓ Take the time to consider toxic-free products and read labels.
- ✓ Maintain and adjust combustion appliances and ensure proper venting to the outside.
- ✓ Be recognized for all of your hard work this summer by applying for an IAQ TfS National Excellence Award or National Model of Sustained Excellence Award.
- ✓ Read profiles of past award winners, and view the applications. The deadline to apply is September 12, 2008 – start your application early!