



ABCs and 123s of Safe and Healthy Schools Environmental Health Program Children's Mercy

HVAC Systems and Ventilation

- Do not block or obstruct supply, return, or exhaust vents
- If windows are opened during mild weather, consider impacts on those with allergies or asthma
- If heaters or fans are required to maintain occupant comfort, facility staff should evaluate systems serving these areas to determine what can be done to improve occupant comfort. Heaters should have tilt safety shut-off switch to prevent fires

Cleaning and Allergen Control

- Maintain rooms free of clutter, as dust and other allergens may build up in classrooms
- Minimize or eliminate animals in the classroom
 - If present, check with students regarding allergies and place any pets in an isolated location where allergens are less likely to impact occupant health
- Minimize or eliminate carpeted and upholstered surfaces, as they act as reservoirs for allergens, dust, and other potential contaminants
 - Example: Carpets vacuumed daily, but how often are chairs or curtains cleaned or vacuumed?
 - Consider what type of equipment and process are used (HEPA-equipped vacuums, damp dusting, use of microfiber cloths, etc.)
- Minimize plants in the classroom as they may be difficult to dust and can add humidity to the classroom environment
- If disinfectants and sanitizers are used, ensure that they are allowed to remain on surfaces for the manufacturer's recommended residence time

Moisture Control and Mold Prevention

- Notify custodian regarding any leaks or other signs of moisture intrusion on ceilings, walls, and floors
- Notify custodian regarding any musty or moldy odors, which could indicate a moisture problem
- If moisture issues are addressed and resolved within 48 hours, there should be no mold contamination or growth

Source Control and Room Condition

- Minimize or eliminate carpeted and upholstered surfaces, as they act as reservoirs for allergens, dust, and other potential contaminants
- Minimize or eliminate the use of fragranced products, air fresheners, candles, hot plates with jars of wax, and oils with sticks
- Minimize or eliminate the use of products brought in by staff, as they are generally stored under classroom sinks in unlocked cabinets or actually out in the classroom
 - Custodian will be happy to provide staff district-approved, pre-mixed cleaning solutions for specific needs or applications
- Periodically assess classrooms for the presence of flaking paint, and if found, notify custodian. This is of particular concern in facilities constructed prior to 1978, when lead was "banned" from use in consumer paints and other products

Safety, Security, and Injury Prevention

- Keep all facility doors locked at all times, with visitors being required to check-in with front office and that they wear “Visitor” badges while in the facility
- Emergency procedures should be present and posted in each location in the facility
- Store any and all chemicals in locked cabinets or out of reach of students
- Assess the classroom for any slip, trip, and fall hazards and minimize or remove hazards identified
- Ground Fault Circuit Interrupt (GFCI) outlets are recommended for any outlet located within 5’ of a water source
- Minimize or eliminate electrical hazards
 - Examples: Loose wires, small gauge extension cords, extension cords near water, outlets missing cover plates, and overloaded outlets or power strips
- Do not store items within 18” of the ceiling, as this may be against fire codes
- Fire extinguisher should be located within 75’ of any location in the facility

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

- Minimize or eliminate food in the classroom as it can attract pests
- Identify, address, and resolve any moisture issues in the facility, as this can be used as a water source for pests
- Eliminate any harborage sites, both inside and outside of the facility
- If pests are identified, request that Pest Management Professional (PMP) uses less toxic products (baits, traps, gels, etc.)
- If Pest Management Professional (PMP) is performing applications of pesticides, ensure that signage is posted indicating that pesticides have been used in the facility and where, to prevent unwanted occupant exposures to these toxins

The Learning/Working Environment

- Ensure that each location within the facility has adequate lighting for task-based activities expected to occur in each location
- Minimize or eliminate the use of lamps, because if used in lieu of overhead lighting, they generally do not provide enough light and may make it more difficult for students to learn
- Assess classroom environment for noise issues that may make it difficult for students to concentrate and learn (No, we’re not talking about students)

