

# APPROVED ALLERGY FIGHTERS SDN BHD (598638-M)

A1-26 Kompleks Industri Puchong, No: 1, Jln TPP 1/6, Taman Industri Puchong, 47100 Puchong, Selangor  
Tel: 603-80608055 Fax: 603-80641711 email: contactme@approvedgroup.biz

## Indoor Air Quality (IAQ): Is your work place “killing” you?

The term "**sick building syndrome**" (**SBS**) is used to describe situations in which building occupants experience acute health and discomfort effects that appear to be linked to time spent in a building, but no specific illness or cause can be identified. The complaints may be localized in a particular room or zone, or may be widespread throughout the building. In contrast, the term "**building related illness**" (**BRI**) is used when symptoms of diagnosable illness are identified and can be attributed directly to airborne building contaminants.

A 1984 World Health Organization Committee report suggested that up to 30 percent of new and remodeled buildings worldwide may be the subject of excessive complaints related to **INDOOR AIR QUALITY (IAQ)**. Often this condition is temporary, but some buildings have long-term problems. Frequently, problems result when a building is operated or maintained in a manner that is inconsistent with its original design or prescribed operating procedures. Sometimes indoor air problems are a result of poor building design or occupant activities.

### **Indicators of SBS Include:**

Building occupants complain of symptoms associated with acute discomfort, e.g., headache; eye, nose, or throat irritation; dry cough; dry or itchy skin; dizziness and nausea; difficulty in concentrating; fatigue; and sensitivity to odors.

The direct cause of the symptoms is not known, however, some of the complainants report much relief soon after leaving the affected building.

### **Indicators of BRI Include:**

1. Building occupants complain of symptoms such as cough; chest tightness; fever, chills; and muscle aches
2. The symptoms can be clinically defined and have clearly identifiable causes.
3. Complainants may require prolonged recovery times after leaving the building.
4. It is important to note that complaints may result from other causes. These may include an illness contracted outside the building, acute sensitivity (e.g., allergies), job related stress or dissatisfaction, and other psychosocial factors. Nevertheless, studies show that symptoms may be caused or exacerbated by indoor air quality problems.

### **Causes of Sick Building Syndrome**

The following have been cited as some causes of or contributing factors to sick building syndrome:

#### **Inadequate Ventilation**

In many cases outdoor (fresh) air ventilation rates are found to be inadequate to maintain the health and comfort of building occupants. Inadequate ventilation, which may also occur if ventilating, and air conditioning (AHU) systems do not effectively distribute air to people in the building, is thought to be an important factor in SBS.

#### **Chemical Contaminants From Indoor Sources**

Most indoor air pollution comes from sources inside the building. For example, adhesives, carpeting, upholstery, manufactured wood products, copy machines, pesticides, and cleaning agents may emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs), including formaldehyde. Environmental tobacco smoke contributes







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This dust test detects mold spores that have been settling into the dust over the past several weeks or months.

Both tests together give a good picture of past and present conditions. Your results are compared with the outside environment conditions and recommended practice by DOSH. Results that are significantly higher than the median level in our database usually indicate an Indoor Air Quality problem in your building.

**What you will receive:** You will receive a comprehensive report after the inspection that will describe our observations, all test results with interpretations, conclusions and recommendations.

## I. Findings – Observations and test results

- What the walk-through found
- What were the test results
- What the levels and units mean
- Description of instruments used

## II. Interpretations – What the findings mean

- How bad is it? – a slight, moderate or severe problem
- How these results compare to other similar buildings in your area and the outside environment
- Most probable cause of the problems?
- How concerned should you be? A few square inches of mold on one window will not be a problem for most people. A wall or closet full of mold will be a problem for almost everyone.

## III. Recommendations – What to do about it

Every problem has a solution. We give step-by-step instructions on how to deal with any problems found.

- Effective and safe clean-up procedures
- Resources for remediation and repair services and healthier products
- Ways to prevent reoccurrence of problems
- Air conditioning and air filtration improvements
- Ventilation improvements

**Conclusion:** Indoor Air Quality is one of the major health concerns of modern time. It needs to be addressed swiftly for long term well being and continued optimum productivity. The annual Healthy Building Certification Program will ensure the health and safety of the occupants and increased productivity and profitability for the owners.

## Kirit Kumar Indoor Air Quality Specialist

BBA (Spore), Grad Dip Mkt Comms (Spore), Certified Mold Remediation Specialist (American Indoor Air Quality Council - USA), Certified Indoor Air Quality Technician (American Indoor Air Quality Council - USA), Certified Indoor Air Quality Technician (Association of Energy Engineers - USA), Senior Carpet Inspector (IICRC - USA), Master Cleaner (IICRC- USA), Master Restorer (IICRC - USA), Certified Restorer (ASCR-USA).

