



Air Quality Management Strategies for Dorm Rooms

What is good Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)?

A good indoor air environment includes comfortable temperature and humidity, adequate supply of fresh outdoor air, and control of pollutants from inside and outside of the building.

Why may I have Indoor Air Quality issues?

- High humidity from small room sizes and multiple occupants' body heat and respiration has been shown to decrease occupant satisfaction with air quality.
- Allergen exposures in a new geographic region, dust mites and other pests, pet dander and hair carried in on-body or soft surface, etc. may trigger or increase individual symptoms.
- Research also shows lighting, furniture crowding, stress, feelings about the physical aspects of the environment, noise and vibration may contribute to the perception of poor IAQ.

When do I act to maintain or improve IAQ?

- Frequently and briefly open doors and windows to mix outside and room air. (Buildings with unopenable windows have ventilation systems that provide filtered supply air.)
- Invite visitors from dorm room to common or outside spaces for social or study time.
- Regularly clean room by dusting surfaces, vacuuming carpets and other housekeeping tasks.
- Consistently wash, dry and appropriately store clothes, towels, bedding and pillows.
- Promptly clean up spills that attract pests and empty room trash bins as needed.

How can I set up my room to promote IAQ?

- Minimize soft surfaces (carpets, couches, bedding, etc.) that collect dust in the room.
- Space out essential furniture and place away from exterior walls to promote air circulation.
- Use tile, glass, metal and other materials to discourage microbial growth and pests.
- Add a personal particulate air cleaner with HEPA/HEPA-like filter to help remove allergens, but avoid ozone generating or ionization air cleaners and follow manufacturer instructions.
- Refrain from using air fresheners because they trigger asthma and allergy symptoms.

Where do I report an IAQ issue?

Residents report IAQ issues in University Housing's online Maintenance and Repair Service (MARS) at <https://www.housing.wisc.edu/residence-halls/services/maintenance/> to ensure tracking and follow-up.

Submit a web-based "Maintenance Request" form for non-emergency repairs or contact a House Fellow or Hall Desk for emergency repairs like water leaks, signs of pest and heating or cooling system issues. University Housing contacts UW-Madison Environmental and Occupational Health and other campus support groups for follow up to resident requests.

Note testing air quality is generally not verifiable because no IAQ regulations or health-based standards for indoor/outdoor mold exist and because each person reacts differently to their environment.