The Cost of Poor Inner Air Quality (IAQ)

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Indoor pollution can be a significant environmental threat to human health. On average, individuals spend over 90 percent of their time indoors. Often the quality of the indoor air, especially in the workplace is poor, and can contain airborne viruses, chemicals, dusts, mold, mold spores, and radiation, at concentrations 2 to 5 times higher than outdoor air.

Studies on the financial impacts of poor **IAQ** estimate losses between $12 billion and $125 billion annually to the U.S. economy. This translates to a 5.7% and 14.2% loss of productivity for companies in facilities with **IAQ.**

The following is a list of important ways to improve IAQ:

Communication: An open communication policy between facility management, maintenance staff, and building occupants helps uncover concerns early before they become major problems.

Source control: Fabrics, glues, paint, sealants and other materials used to make office furniture, décor and electronics can emit pollutants in the air. The GREENGUARD Environmental Institute™ (GEI) is a non-profit organization that oversees the GREENGUARD Certification Program for low pollutant-emitting products. Purchasing tested or certified products can result in improved **IAQ** and often do not cost any more than non-certified products.

Air flow: Most buildings can be retrofitted with updated HVAC sensors and controllers to provide adequate ventilation and air exchange. Once it is updated, regular maintenance of the HVAC system is necessary to protect the quality of the indoor environment.

Remodeling: Schedule repair, renovation, and construction efforts so they have minimal impact on the indoor environment and do not contaminate occupied spaces.

Education: Building occupants must be educated on good **IAQ** practices. Without proper ventilation, smoking, cooking, laboratory activity, idling trucks, etc. may compromise an effective **IAQ** management plan.

By following these steps, you will provide your employees with a safe environment and possibly increase their productivity. A study conducted by the National Energy Management Institute (NEMI) and West Bend Mutual Insurance Company estimates that West Bend was able to increase productivity 6% to 8% by creating and maintaining good indoor environmental quality in their facilities.

To learn more about GREENGUARD standards and how to improve your IAQ, go to www.greenguard.com or contact CJ & Associates, Inc. at 262-786-1772 to choose IAQ friendly workstations and office décor for your employees.

CJ & Associates, Inc., whose president, Kim Hastings was named a 2007 Woman of Influence, is one of the Top 25 Largest Women-Owned Businesses in Wisconsin. The company is a 2007 Top Milwaukee Workplace honoree and was selected to the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce/Council of Small Business Executives Future 50 List.

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