

Appendix B.2

Information for Custodial Staff

The school custodial staff plays a vital role in a school's indoor air quality. Cleaning methods and materials significantly impact the particulate and volatile organic compound (VOC) levels in schools. Custodians can help provide and maintain healthy indoor air.

Cleaning:

Carpets:

Carpet needs to be properly maintained or removed. Vacuum regularly with a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter machine (or at least a HEPA or 1 micron filter bag), when the classroom is unoccupied. Carpet cleaning should be by hot water extraction using a low-residue, environmentally sensitive (green clean) cleaner. Cleaner and water must be thoroughly extracted and the carpet should dry within 24-48 hours. Dried cleaner, if not thoroughly removed, can be a skin and respiratory irritant for some people.

Hard Floors:

Dust with static electricity or micro-fiber mops daily. Wet mop the surface weekly.

Dusting:

All horizontal surfaces should be damp dusted weekly with a micro-fiber or static electricity cloth.

Cleaning Supplies:

Evaluate cleaners and chemicals, replacing with the least toxic or safer, "green" alternatives when possible. Use metered dispensers for chemicals to ensure that they are always diluted according to directions. Do not use urinal cakes or deodorants, which are known to be toxic. Air fresheners and deodorants should not be used in schools. Proper cleaning and ventilation should be used to take care of odor problems. Schools should consider policies on making their schools fragrance free.

Pesticides/Herbicides:

Integrated Pest Management must be followed. Teachers must not use pesticides of any kind. Pesticides are a last resort and must only be used by a licensed applicator, following the directions on the label. Unlicensed staff must not use pesticides of any kind. Students should not be present and the Washington State School Pesticide Notification Law must be followed: (<http://www.leg.wa.gov/RCW/index.cfm?fuseaction=section§ion=17.21.415>)

HVAC (Heating, ventilation, air conditioning) System:

Filters:

Upgrade the filters in the HVAC system to 30% ASHRAE extended surface, pleated filters. Replace all filters on a quarterly basis, and after any construction work involving drywall or woodworking.

Ventilation:

Pollutants can build up in the air in buildings. Dilution ventilation is necessary to improve indoor air quality. Classrooms require 15 CFM/person of fresh air, 20 CFM/person for laboratories, during occupancy. The easiest way to test for appropriate ventilation levels is to keep CO₂ levels below 1150ppm. HVAC should be properly maintained for maximum efficiency.

References: *The Washington State Department of Health School Indoor Air Quality Best management Practices Manual, The EPA Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools*

Integrated Pest Management: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/pesticides/upest/index.html>

