



CLEARING THE AIR in the workplace

Because we spend approximately 90 percent of our time indoors, with much of that time in the workplace, good air quality needs to be a priority for facility managers, building owners and those who plan facilities -- designers and architects. It is important to minimize any factors in the workplace environment that could contribute to poor air quality and, consequently, possible health reactions. It is also important to find every way to contribute to a good environment by using good visual features, functional options, and operational systems.

Diverse color and textural options and the benefits of reducing noise, glare, and slips and falls make carpet a critical design element in today's commercial interiors. But, carpet also plays a significant role in helping to manage the indoor environment because frequent vacuuming and cleaning will help to remove the dust from that environment. The following questions and answers examine the commercial indoor environment and carpet's role in that environment.

The solution to a good indoor environment is a combination of good quality air circulation, controlled humidity and a well cleaned facility.

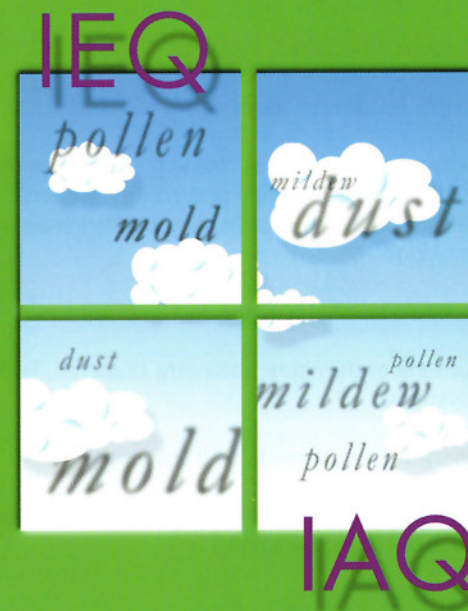
For more information on carpet's role in the indoor environment, or to review a list of manufacturers participating in the Vacuum Cleaner Indoor Air Quality program, visit www.carpet-rug.com, www.carpet-schools.com or call 1-800-882-8846.

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A GUIDE TO MANAGING
INDOOR ENVIRONMENT QUALITY
AND INDOOR AIR QUALITY

What factors can impact IEQ?

By far, the most negative factors are excess moisture from any source, inadequate or contaminated air handling units (HVAC) and inadequate cleaning of the facility. Others might include:

- ❏ Outdoor air quality
- ❏ People (exhalation, body odors, diseases)
- ❏ Activities (work such as cleaning, using correction fluids, carbonless paper, pest control products, and personal activities such as wearing fragrances and smoking)
- ❏ Technology (photocopiers and laser printers)
- ❏ Furnishings (furniture, cabinetry, draperies, floor coverings)
- ❏ Finishes (paint, varnish, wall coverings)
- ❏ Building materials (caulking compounds, adhesives, paneling, wood laminates)

What can I do to ensure these sources do not contribute to poor IEQ?

The CRI suggests the following ways to maintain good indoor air quality:

Water Damage Repair

All water damage, internal or external, should be identified and repaired immediately. A leaky roof or plumbing, creating wet wood, ceiling tiles, wall board, carpet, or any other building materials, may result in biological growth on many different surfaces. These biologicals may be circulated into the breathing zone. If ANY interior finish exhibits mold growth, immediate action should be taken to identify and remove the source of the moisture. The next action should be to completely clean or replace molded products.

HVAC Maintenance and Use

Maintenance and cleaning of all heat and air conditioning units are necessary to provide adequate quantities of good

quality air to building inhabitants. Constant use of the HVAC system, especially in humid climates, is critical for controlling humidity and avoiding excess moisture. Improper maintenance and infrequent or inconsistent use of the HVAC may result in spreading mold through the system. To avoid moisture problems, relative humidity should remain at or below 55 percent and the HVAC should run continuously, even in the "night mode."

Proper Cleaning

The regular and proper cleaning of all surfaces (floors, carpet, horizontal surfaces, furniture, walls, desks, shelving, etc.) will reduce the amount of allergen and bacteria build-up in a building. Take care to use cleaning chemicals properly, and take care not to circulate dust from floors and horizontal surfaces back into the air.

Can carpet be a source that causes poor IEQ?

Carpet itself is not a source of mold and mildew without dirt and moisture. Visible mold is a manifestation of inadequate maintenance, excess moisture problems, and poor HVAC ventilation.

In some situations, people consider removing carpet because of the perceived negative impact. It has been shown that removing carpet does not impact the amount of allergies or asthma. Dr. Scott Schroeder, a pediatrician from Bronx, New York, noted that carpet was removed in the Bronx New York school system and that had no impact on the increase of asthma in the students there.

Also, based on statistics published by the Swedish Statistical Central Bureau, Professors Shishoo and Borjesson of the Swedish Institute of Fibre and Polymer Research pointed out that, while the use of carpet in Sweden had steadily decreased since 1975, the occurrences of allergic reactions in the general population had increased, and therefore, the removal and decline of carpet usage did not mean improved conditions for allergic patients. Furthermore, the population missed the advantages of carpet, such as comfort, insulation and noise reduction.

What is the impact of inadequate maintenance?

Inadequate maintenance of any indoor surface or fabric can have a negative effect on indoor air quality. Dust and allergens should be removed from all surfaces regularly. Routine vacuuming and periodic extraction cleaning will remove the materials that settle on carpet.

Daily vacuuming of carpet is recommended in heavy traffic areas. Vacuuming of other carpeted areas should be scheduled based on the amount of traffic. Upholstered furniture and any other textiles should be regularly vacuumed.



Use vacuum cleaners that bear the CRI Vacuum Cleaner Indoor Air Quality green label. These vacuum cleaner models have been tested and meet the stringent criteria for removing soil, containing dust within the bag and the machine, and keeping the carpet looking good.

Extraction cleaning should be scheduled regularly, before the carpet shows soiling. The cleaning schedule should be based on the amount of traffic and the type of soiling. Entry ways are an example of high traffic places that may need frequent cleanings, while an office far away from the entrance may need less frequent cleanings.

When having carpet cleaned, it is most important to carefully remove the soil, the cleaning agent and the moisture from the carpet. Ventilate during the cleaning process and afterwards for several hours. Ensure that the carpet is completely dry within twelve hours and avoid traffic until completely dry.

