

CT Foundation for Environmentally Safe Schools

A nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting policies, practices and resources that protect school occupants from environmental health hazards

www.pollutionfreeschools.org

2006 Advocacy Checklist

1. **Observe** your surroundings and use your senses when inside the school. Take note of the following:
 - a. Are there any signs of water damage?
 - b. Are there visible signs of mold or mildew growth?
 - c. Are ceiling tiles, walls, carpets or window frames wet or stained?
 - d. Are floor tiles raised?
 - e. Do all classrooms have operable windows?
 - f. Are air vents free of obstructions?
 - g. Is the ventilation system working?
 - h. Are art, science or cleaning supplies stored in classrooms?
 - i. Does the school have unusual, musty, stale or unpleasant odors?
 - j. Do trucks, buses or cars idle near the school? Where? For how long?

2. **Inquire** as to whether your school currently uses or has used the EPA's *Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Program* (TfS) or has a Health and Safety Committee that deals with IAQ issues. If the TfS program is up and running find out:
 - a. When did this IAQ program begin?
 - b. Who is on the TfS team or Health and Safety Committee addressing IAQ?
 - c. If there is an IAQ coordinator for you to contact?

3. **Ask** the school official in charge (IAQ Coordinator, principal or superintendent):
 - a. How are sources of indoor air pollution screened, identified and remediated?
 - b. How are related issues such as renovations, pesticides and bus idling being addressed?
 - c. To send you a copy of any written documentation of the IAQ program.

Fact Sheet for 2006 Advocacy Checklist

1. Public Act 03-220 An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality in Schools (effective July 2003) states in Section 1 that “each local and regional board of education shall adopt and implement an indoor air quality program that provides for ongoing maintenance and facility reviews necessary for the maintenance and improvement of the indoor air quality of its facilities; shall report annually to the Commissioner of Education on the condition of its facilities and the action taken to implement its long-term school building program and indoor air quality program...” In 2006, Public Act 06-158 changed the reporting on facility conditions from yearly to every other year.
2. The CT School Indoor Environment Resource Team provides free Tools for Schools (TfS) training to school districts. For information call Kenny Foscue at the CT Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7742, for brochure go to: www.dph.state.ct.us/Publications/brs/eoha/schoolteam.pdf
3. If your school does not have a Tools for Schools Team or an IAQ Committee dealing with environmental issues, please see Section 9 of Public Act 03-220. An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality in Schools states “no local or regional board of education, superintendent or school administrator may prohibit a school safety committee established pursuant to Section 10-220f of the general statutes from addressing indoor air quality issues that affect the health of occupants of school facilities.”
4. In 2003 the School Facility Survey (ED050) was revised to enable school officials to report on the indoor air quality of each school. The ED050 uses the following scale to rate each school:
 1. Major concerns involving several outstanding issues and/or unresolved complaints of significant impact. The school may have to be closed until the issues are resolved.
 2. A few outstanding issues or complaints or complaints of significant impact but not so significant to require closing the school.
 3. A few minor issues or complaints which are currently being addressed.
 4. No issue or complaints of any significance.

For more information on how your school was rated consult the section of the CT State Department of Education website dealing with the condition of CT

public school facilities:

<http://www.csde.state.ct.us/public/dgm/ed050/pickyear.asp>

5. For information on school construction and renovation see:
 - EPA's Design Tools for Schools at www.epa.gov/iaq/schooldesign
 - Section 6b(3) of Public Act 03-220, An Act Concerning Indoor Air Quality in Schools requires schools constructed, extended or replaced after July 1, 2003 to follow SMACNA "Indoor Air Quality Guidelines for Occupied Buildings Under Construction" in order to receive approval for a school building project from the State Department of Education. (These SMACNA guidelines can be purchased for \$108 by logging onto www.smacna.org.)
 6. CT Public Act 02-56 (effective Oct. 1, 2002), An Act Concerning Idling of School Buses states school buses cannot idle for more than three consecutive minutes. To read Children's Exposure to Diesel Exhaust on School Buses log onto www.ehhi.org and look under "recent reports and publications."
 7. Public Act 99-165, An Act Concerning Notice of Pesticide Applications at Schools and Day Care Centers (effective July 1, 1999). This law requires prior notification to parents (who sign up in advance) before a pesticide application is made to their children's school. It stipulates that only certified applicators are allowed to apply pesticides (as defined in this law) and such applications cannot be done during school hours or planned events (except in an emergency situation).
 8. Public Act 05-252, An Act Concerning Pesticides at Schools and Day Care Centers (effective Oct. 2005 and Jan. 2006) defines "pesticide" and "lawn care pesticide." It specifically prohibits the use of pesticides and lawn care pesticides except for emergency applications at child and group day care centers as well as public/private preschools and elementary schools.
- * For further information regarding Connecticut laws involving school environmental health log onto www.ehhi.org for legislation section.