

ASHRAE Technical FAQ

ID 29

Question How can I tell if my building is a "sick building"?

If a significant number of occupants complain of eye, nose, and throat irritation, headaches, dizziness, or difficulty concentrating, but recover soon after leaving the building, these are strong indicators of poor air quality. Buildings with consistently high levels of complaints are commonly called "sick buildings."

A Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) by [NIOSH](#) or a similar evaluation by a qualified IAQ test organization will indicate if the building has indoor air quality problems.

Answer Adequate ventilation is often a solution to indoor air quality problems. [ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2016](#)- "Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality" specifies outside air ventilation rates for acceptable indoor air quality.

Copies of the standard, the latest addenda, and other publications may be purchased on-line at our website, www.ashrae.org/ or by calling 1-800-527-4723 in the USA and Canada or 1-404-636-8400 worldwide. Addenda to the standards may be downloaded for free.

A Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) by [NIOSH](#) or a similar evaluation by an independent qualified IAQ test organization.

[NIOSH](#) - National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, (www.cdc.gov/niosh/homepage.html)

ASHRAE Pubs [ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2016](#), Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality, plus [ASHRAE BOD approved addenda](#)

["What we know, and don't know about sick building syndrome"](#), J. Sundell. ASHRAE Journal, vol.38, no.6. 1996.

Topic References Building Related Illness
Sick Building

	Cognizant ASHRAE Committees	Refer to Organization
1	TC 4.3	NIOSH
2	SSPC 62.1	
3	EHC	
4		
5		