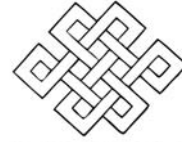




EHS-International, Inc.



HEALTHY BUILDINGS, INC

13228 NE 20th Street, Suite 100, Bellevue, Washington, 98005-2049

Phone: 425-455-2959 Fax: 425-646-7247

www.ehsintl.com

Looking for a Healthier Home

Tips for identifying environmental problems in a house or apartment before you sign anything, for people with extreme **allergies or other sensitivities**.

STEPS TO COMPLETE BEFORE WALKING THROUGH THE HOME OR CONDOMINIUM

- *If masking chemical odors such as air fresheners, plugins or perfumed candles are being used or several windows are open, much of the following will not work.*
- Wear clothes in which you feel comfortable exploring the lower nooks and crannies.
- Take a powerful flashlight, even in the daytime.
- Pay very close attention to what you see and smell and how you feel.
- Because the olfactory nerve shuts down after the first 20 seconds of being in a different environment, pay very close attention to your senses in those first 20 seconds.

BEFORE ENTERING THE DWELLING, OR BUILDING:

- Prepare everyone to avoid talking for the first 1-2 minutes in the building.

ENTERING THE DWELLING, OR BUILDING:

- Enter the building quickly to minimize outside air exchanging with the indoor air.
- Avoid talking for the first 1-2 minutes in a room or the entry. Walk around the main room(s) near the entry door while taking 5 - 10 breaths and continue noting your olfactory and other senses.
- Take a few minutes to scan your body and note the information. Some signs you may experience ranging from one or all of these reactions are stiffness in the neck and shoulders, dizziness, subtle changes in mental state, including confusion. Note strange odors and eye or lung irritations.

TO ASSESS THE OTHER ROOMS THAT ARE DISTINCT FROM THE MAIN ROOM(S):

- Go outside again, quiet yourself and again find your centering place within. Enter, holding your breath, and walk directly to one of the separate rooms as before, not talking and noting your olfactory and other senses while taking 5-10 breaths.

AREAS TO CHECK THROUGHOUT THE HOME:

- **Windows:** Is there mold around the windows? When assessing windows, a few linear inches of mold around the window is acceptable. The more area covered and the more windows with mold growth, the greater the risk. Mold growth around the windows is often an indication of little or no ventilation and/or condensation problems.

- **Baseboards:** Look along the edges of the baseboards. Gently pull some molding back about 1/4 - 1/2 inches to check for mold growth.
- **Closets and corners:** The closets should be smelled and visually checked with a flashlight for mold. If the wall surface reaches the dew point or if there is a leak in the wall, the lower corners of closets and bedrooms can become moldy.
- **Kitchen and bathrooms:** Cabinets under sinks: open and sniff and pay attention. If there were any plumbing leaks, it should be determined if it can be properly cleaned or if there is permanent damage and/or rotting wood that needs to be replaced. Are there holes or openings around the plumbing?
- **Toilet tank:** Look under the bottom of the toilet tank and behind the water tank for mold. A large amount of mold is a bad sign.
- **Bathroom and range fans:** Do they work? Are they noisy? Are they vented directly to the outside? Are they clean?
- **Ducts:** Lift up one of the supply vent covers: Is it full of dust and/or debris? Are there air gaps between the ducting and the floor?
- **Basements:** Get on your hands and knees and sniff at the electrical outlets in basements or suspected moist walls for any scent of contamination from molds, chemicals, rodents and musty or unusual odors.
- **Attic:** Look for water streaks, signs of moisture or mold on the rafters, roof sheathing and insulation. Look for signs of rodents, birds or insects.
- **Crawl spaces:** At least peak in the crawlspace: Is there a vapor barrier (poly) covering the floor? Can you see screened vents on each wall? Are there any signs of standing water, mold or rodents?
- **Garage:** If attached: Is the door to the house weather-stripped and auto closing? Is the furnace in the garage? Are garden and paints stored there?

THE BEST TEST is to sleep there overnight. Upon first awakening, the senses are sharp and can often pick up things if we pay attention.

THE SECOND BEST TEST is to spend eight hours there. If staying overnight or during daytime hours, open cabinets, do normal living activities, if possible.

ANOTHER TEST is to sit down in clean air and take your pulse. Then go inside and be in the environment for 5- 10 minutes and take the pulse again.

TYPES OF HEATING SYSTEMS:

For a dwelling with radiant or baseboard heat you may need to have a fresh air intake installed in order for clean air circulation and ventilation. A very quiet bathroom fan (Panasonic 50-70 cfm is a quiet one) can help to ventilate the building. Keep a window cracked at all times. (If the fan is too noisy, you won't use it.) The fan needs to be on at all times. If it's noisy and you need to keep the bathroom door closed, it will work if the door has at least a three-quarter inch undercut.

The best system is a forced air system with an intake source of outside air and a good pleated media filter.

Ozone generators are not safe for humans, animals and plastics and are not effective at low levels.

If large amounts of mold are found, don't move in. Mold spores are allergenic, and some are toxic. The difference between mold growing inside and mold in the air outside is the concentration. It is said that the dose makes the poison.