

Proper Ventilation Guidelines

Today's building ventilation systems are complex. Occasionally, expectations of the system go beyond the limits of its design capability. The system may malfunction and need repair; lack of understanding of some of the basic system functions lead to unintentional misuse of the system. Any of these problems may result in an environment that does not meet the comfort requirements of its occupants making the work place temperature too warm or too cool. Because an individual's comfort is determined by temperature, humidity and air movement, the following items can be checked to help locate the problem:

1. Check to see if vents are open.
2. Make sure that supply or return grilles, radiators, or baseboards are not blocked. If a supply air vent is blowing directly on you and is affecting your comfort move your work space or consult Physical Plant. Do not block the vent.
3. If temperatures are too high, check adjacent rooms to see if an open window could be causing a cool draft over the thermostat.
4. Examine supply and return grilles to determine if they are plugged with dirt and debris.
5. Try to determine exactly when the problem occurs and under what conditions.
6. If the problem is not remedied by one of the previous items, contact the Physical Plant and give them all pertinent information.
7. The Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries guidelines give a minimum temperature range of 60-68° F for public buildings and recommend a temperature range in offices of 68-78° F.

The University of Massachusetts has a policy (#525) on Extreme Temperatures in Work Locations which states in part that, "The consistent practice of the Personnel Office has been to delegate to the Department Head, or his/her designee, the authority to release employees due to extreme temperatures... before releasing employees, every effort should be made to temporarily reassign employees to other work locations within the department where temperatures and other working conditions are normal...Any questions concerning this notice should be directed to the Personnel Office (5-0380)."