

## Regular Housekeeping for Good Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

Regular office housekeeping can help to improve workplace indoor air quality. Custodians will take care of the major part of cleaning in your offices, such as regular vacuuming and emptying trash bins. However, they may not be able to clean your office desks or your personal belongings, etc. Here are some tips:

1. **Improve ventilation.** Check air vents or grills regularly. Do not block air vents and grills. Do not store furniture, boxes or other materials near supply vents or return air grills. If you see dust accumulating in air vents or grills, please contact Facilities Solution Center at 413-545-6401, or fill out the online service request (<https://www.umass.edu/facilities/>), to clean the air vents or grills. If you have operable windows in your office, opening windows from time to time may help improve IAQ. However, opening windows can also increase indoor levels of pollen and mold spores which can trigger allergic reactions in some individuals particularly during peak seasons.
2. **Clean up all water spills promptly.** Water and maintain office plants properly and report water leaks right away to Facilities Solution Center at 413-545-6401 or fill out the online service request (<https://www.umass.edu/facilities/>). Water creates a hospitable environment for the growth of micro-organism such as molds or fungi. Please check the EH&S [fact sheet for preventing mold](#) for more information.
3. **Dispose of garbage promptly and properly.** Dispose of garbage in appropriate containers that are emptied by custodians to prevent odors and biological contamination.
4. **Store food properly.** Food can attract pests. Some foods, if left unrefrigerated, can spoil and generate unpleasant odors. Never store perishable food products in your desk or on shelves.
5. **Clean refrigerators on a regular basis to prevent odors.** Keep break rooms and dining areas clean and sanitize, as necessary, to prevent pests and maintain hygiene.
6. **Maintain air purifiers and humidifiers according to the manufacturer's instructions.** If you have these items in your office, please check and replace the filters regularly. Sanitize humidifiers as recommended to prevent microbial growth. Please check the [air purifier fact sheet](#) and the [humidifiers/dehumidifiers fact sheet](#) for more information.
7. **Clean shelves, desks, and lockers regularly using wet cleaning methods or a HEPA filtered vacuum to prevent airborne dust generation.** Do not stir up dust. Dampening (wetting) surfaces or using wetted wipes reduces the amount of airborne dust.
8. **Keep your office area clean and tidy.** Clutter may trap and hold dust that can later become airborne when disturbed.
9. **Select cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting products carefully as these may increase indoor air pollution.** Use only the amount of product that is necessary to complete the job. Disinfect only when and where required. Fragranced or scented products are not recommended (see the [fact sheet on air fresheners](#) for more information). Do not mix cleaning products unless directed to do so on the label. Contact EH&S if you have questions about appropriate cleaning products.
10. **Do not use pesticides in your office area.** If you believe you have pest control issues, please contact the Facilities Solution Center at 413-545-6401, or fill out the online service request (<https://www.umass.edu/facilities/>), for assistance.

11. **Plants do not improve indoor air quality.** According to the EPA, there is currently no evidence to suggest that a reasonable number of houseplants would be effective in removing significant amounts of pollutants from indoor air. However, indoor houseplants may promote the growth of microorganisms which can affect allergic individuals.
12. **Report any concerns regarding IAQ issues to EH&S at 413-545-2682.**

Reference:

EPA, An Office Building Occupants Guide to Indoor Air Quality: <https://www.epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/office-building-occupants-guide-indoor-air-quality#management>