

WHAT IS A HEALTHY SCHOOL?

- Walk-off mats used to keep dirt outside
- HEPA-filtered vacuums (to control dust)
- Storage is provided to reduce clutter
- No carpets
- Non-toxic cleaners and school supplies used
- No cracks/openings for pests to enter
- Integrated Pest Management Plan in place
- Plan to control moisture and eliminate mold
- Leaks are fixed and spills cleaned quickly
- Well ventilated spaces/classrooms
- Working windows in all rooms
- Anti-idling policies for buses and cars is promoted
- School buses are retrofitted with non-diesel fuel

IF YOUR SCHOOL IS NOT HEALTHY,
CONTACT US!

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Bring our fact sheet to your school and talk to your child's teacher or the school nurse.
- CALL MassCOSH Healthy Schools Initiative for assistance, for a training on establishing an environmental committee at your school or for help in addressing asthma triggers and indoor air quality problems. Our number is 617-825-7233 x19.
- If you work in a school, use the checklist to get started and contact us for further assistance. You can also request an annual environmental audit from the school department.



Mass Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health
Healthy Schools Initiative
42 Charles St, Suite F
Dorchester, MA 02122
(617) 825-7233 x19
www.masscosh.org

Boston Urban Asthma Coalition
622 Washington Street
Dorchester, MA 02124
(617) 279-2271
www.buac.org

IS YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL HEALTHY?

"If you can't breathe, you can't learn."



For more information, contact :

What is the problem with sick schools?



Boston school children have high asthma rates, especially children of color, and our schools are contributing to the health disparities in Boston.

Inspections of Boston schools with high asthma rates noted an overwhelming presence of environmental issues that can cause health problems for children with asthma.

Approximately **85%** of Boston Public Schools reported leaks or water stains,

- 36% reported visible mold growth,
- 63% reported overt pest signs,
- 83% reported repairs needed, and
- 61% reported improper chemical storage.ⁱ



While environmental problems in the school may not be responsible for higher asthma rates, the presence of triggers, such as mold and pests, aggravates children who have already been diagnosed with asthma. The presence of these triggers also contributes to increased absenteeism among asthmatics, and threatens the health, safety, and learning opportunities of all children and school staff.ⁱⁱ

ⁱ. Boston Public Schools, School Environmental Inspection Report, 2005
ⁱⁱ. Who's sick at school, a report by the MA Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health and the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition

Healthy Schools Platform

MassCOSH and the Boston Urban Asthma Coalition's (BUAC) Healthy Schools Committee is composed of parents, school staff, community members, public health and environmental advocates who seek to improve the environmental conditions in school. Our mission is to reduce asthma rates and improve the health and learning opportunities of children and school staff in Boston.



The Healthy Schools Platform promotes common sense criteria for building and maintaining healthy schools.

The action platform includes:

- Establishing School Environmental Committees to inspect building conditions
- Increasing health services for asthmatics
- Using less toxic school chemicals and integrated pest management practices
- Promoting healthy design for construction and renovation projects
- Spending on repairs and maintenance needed to address mold and indoor air quality problems
- Retrofitting school buses to reduce diesel pollution

Do I have a healthy school?



- Do children or staff at school have health complaints they suspect are related to the building conditions?
- Is your school building too hot or too cold?
- Is the ventilation system circulating enough fresh air?
- Are there signs of rodents or bugs?
- Are there strong odors such as vehicle (bus) exhaust, chemical smells, mold or dampness?
- Are there leaks or signs of moisture in the building?
- Is the building clean and in good repair?
- Does the school have an Environmental Committee to audit the school for unsafe conditions?
- Do any of these conditions or others, raise health complaints such as: headaches, fatigue, skin irritations, dry eyes, asthma, repeated respiratory illnesses?

CHECK HOW YOUR SCHOOL IS DOING WITH THIS SURVEY

IF YOUR SCHOOL IS NOT HEALTHY, CONTACT US TO HELP MAKE YOUR SCHOOL A SAFE AND HEALTHY PLACE FOR YOUR CHILDREN