

Technical Bulletin: Sick Building Syndrome

What is Sick Building Syndrome?

Sick Building Syndrome (SBS) is the term used to sum up various symptoms that are experienced by workers caused by the building / environment in which they work.

Sick Building Syndrome is most commonly experienced by office workers who do not have control over the environment they work. Air conditioning and ventilation systems have been proven to increase the presence of SBS.

Symptoms of Sick Building Syndrome

- headaches
- dizziness
- nausea (feeling sick)
- aches and pains
- fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- loss of concentration
- shortness of breath
- sensitivity to odours
- eye, nose and throat irritation
- skin irritation (skin rashes, dry itchy skin)



The symptoms of SBS can appear on their own or in combination with each other. They usually improve or disappear altogether after leaving the building.

Taken from NHS Choices Website.

Causes of Sick Building Syndrome

- poor ventilation
- low humidity
- high temperature or changes in temperature throughout the day
- airborne pollutants, such as dust, carpet fibres or fungal spores
- chemical pollutants, such as cleaning materials
- poor standards of cleanliness in the working environment
- poor lighting that causes glare or flicker on visual display units (VDUs)
- ozone produced by photocopiers and printers
- working with display screen equipment for prolonged periods of time
- psychological factors, such as stress or poor staff morale

Taken from NHS Choices Website.

Awareness

Sick Building Syndrome is poorly understood and often not recognised, but awareness of SBS is increasing with the release of documentation by the Health and Safety Executive on how to deal with SBS.

For testing and assessment in your work place contact our sales team at 01622 832777