



# TOOLS FOR SCHOOLS

## 8-STEP ACTION PLAN B GETTING STARTED

### Step 1. ENLIST SUPPORT for PROGRAM *A Work Both Ends Towards the Middle*@

#### A. Obtain Support From:

- \$ Superintendents, Business Officers
- \$ Other School Personnel (e.g., O&M, safety & risk management, environmental specialists)
- \$ Parents and Community Groups

*To successfully implement a new program in a school or school district, there must be support from those who are directly involved in evaluating and improving environmental quality (EQ), as well as commitment from school officials who have the authority and decision-making responsibility to allocate resources. Administrative support of superintendents and/or budget officers is necessary for staff to assign part of their time or budgets to improving EQ. In turn, the involvement of parent and community groups endorses the school administration=s support of the program. Begin the TFS program by focusing on a few school buildings and showing success; then gradually expand to include other schools.*

### Step 2. ASSIGN EQ RESPONSIBILITY

#### B. Designate EQ Coordinator(s)

*It is very important that someone representing the district and/or at each school be responsible for initiating and leading the EQ program. These coordinators can provide the oversight necessary for performing evaluations, completing corrective actions, and acting as a resource for other staff members.*

### Step 3. BECOME FAMILIAR WITH TFS KIT

#### C. Review Materials and Forms

*The TFS kit contains a wide variety of reference materials, sample letters and memos, and forms and checklists that may be used to implement an EQ program and to conduct building assessments. While you may not have time to read all of the materials from beginning to end, it is helpful to spend a little time looking through the kit to know what it contains.*

### Step 4. ANNOUNCE THE PROGRAM TO THE SCHOOL

#### D. Meet with Principals, Teachers, and Staff

- \$ Discuss TFS Program and Forms
- \$ Distribute Checklists and Backgrounder
- \$ Identify Staff Roles in Good EQ
- \$ Communicate EQ Reporting Procedures

*Successful implementation requires a collaborative effort involving other school personnel (teachers, administrative staff, O&M, safety and risk management) and outside contractors (plumbers, painters, electricians, HVAC technicians). It is crucial to meet with the teachers and staff to discuss the TFS program and distribute the TFS Backgrounders before beginning the program at each school. At the meeting, also hand out the various TFS Checklists (Teacher, Administrative Staff, Health Officer, and Food Service) and provide information as to the purpose of the forms. The staff should be educated on their role in maintaining good EQ through newsletters, EQ orientations, etc. An effective feedback process that quickly identifies EQ problems, requires that procedures for reporting EQ problems also be communicated to school staff. EQ coordinators and O&M staff involved in the TFS program should also periodically participate in formal training programs.*

## Step 5. DEVELOP an EQ PROFILE

- E. Gather Completed Staff Checklists
- F. Review Building Plans
- G. Interview Teachers and Staff
- H. Perform EQ Evaluation and Walk-Through
- I. Make Measurements Where Appropriate
- J. Establish Logging / Filing / Tracking System
- K. Review Evaluation with School Staff

*Information on the current conditions in the school buildings can be gathered from:*

- (a) completed TFS checklists from staff and teachers,*
- (b) review of building plans and equipment schedules,*
- (c) interviews with teachers, and administrative, custodial, and O&M staff that identify concerns, activities and operations,*
- (d) EQ evaluations / walk-throughs performed by the EQ coordinator or trained staff member using the Quick-Start documents to identify and record existing EQ problems and to establish >baseline= conditions B which can be used as a point of reference if problems arise at a later date, and*
- (e) measurements of carbon dioxide levels, temperature and relative humidity, and others as appropriate (Appendix C, TFS IAQ Coordinator=s Guide).*

*To organize this information, a filing and tracking system should be established that logs complaints, results of walk-throughs, and work orders issued for repair or corrective action. Keep the staff involved by briefings on the evaluation findings.*

## Step 6. IDENTIFY and PRIORITIZE EXISTING PROBLEMS

- L. Identify and Prioritize Existing Problems

*Problems that are identified during the evaluations/walk-throughs, or that arise through the complaint process at other times, need to be assigned a priority for corrective action. Emergency situations, such as flue gases leaking from heating equipment, or flood-damaged materials and carpeting, require immediate attention. Other situations can be handled on an as-needed basis, ranging from existing problems (e.g., blocked outdoor air vents), potential problems (e.g., deferred pest management), to comfort issues (e.g., poor temperature control). For additional information see Sections 10 & 11 in the TFS IAQ Coordinator=s Guide.*

## Step 7. RESOLVE EQ PROBLEMS

- M. Correct and Manage EQ Problems
  - \$ Integrate into Existing Work Order System
  - \$ Good EQ & Building Hygiene During Repairs
  - \$ Follow Up After Completion of Work (have any complaints stopped?)
  - \$ Modify Procedures to Manage Problems
- N. Establish Problem Response Procedures

*EQ problems can be corrected by integrating EQ complaint/problem resolution into the present work order system. The school staff or outside contractors involved in the operational changes, repairs or renovations should be instructed in practices to maintain good EQ and building hygiene during the corrective process. The goal is to minimize the exposure of building occupants to indoor air pollutants that may be produced as the changes are implemented. After the corrective work is completed, follow up inspections, EQ evaluations and/or measurements, and occupant interviews should be performed to verify that the problem has been solved. O&M procedures, such as HVAC operations, housekeeping, and pest control, may need to be modified so that minor problems can be promptly remedied before they turn into more serious and costly EQ situations. Additional information is available in Sections 12 & 13 of the TFS IAQ Coordinator=s Guide. To improve response to EQ problems, develop procedures to be followed when problems arise, and inform staff of these procedures.*

## Step 8. PROMOTE THE ACHIEVEMENTS and BENEFITS OF PROGRAM

- O. Announce Successes
- P. Recognize through EPA-sponsored Awards Programs

*EPA-sponsored awards or certificates given for participating in the TFS program or for implementing EQ improvements are strong incentives for the involved individuals and schools to continue their efforts, and acknowledges their worthwhile contributions. When these awards are presented before school boards, PTA/PTC groups, and media gatherings, the recognition goes beyond the school community and shows that the school and its staff are taking positive, active steps towards improving the indoor environment of the school and the health of its occupants.*