

Protect your business from excessive costs resulting from microbial contamination in HVAC systems

Airborne pollutants such as chemicals, dusts, fibres and microbiological contaminants may have a directly toxic, irritant or allergenic effect. They are among the contributing factors to sick building syndrome, a general term that covers a wide range of factors that can affect the health and performance of a building's occupants.

According to the HSE there is a particularly high incidence in certain types of buildings, especially offices which are sealed and mechanically ventilated or air-conditioned.

The owners or facilities managers have a duty of care to a building's users, and a failure to do so that results in illness risks costly court and compensation cases, but there are other potential costs to be considered, including the additional energy costs that can result from inefficient operation of an HVAC system.

The use of low efficiency and poorly fitting filters can promote the build-up of dusts and microbial contamination in the HVAC system.

Fungal and microbial proliferation within AC Systems can also dramatically reduce the system's operating efficiency.

Ensuring adequate ventilation and attention to the cleanliness of ductwork are therefore clearly sensible precautions to protect a business's bottom line.

Regular inspection, cleaning and maintenance of filters and duct systems will prevent potential problems.

Employ a specialist and experienced contractor to carry out this work. Make sure that their service works fully to HVCA best practice which will ensure the company uses HVAC specialised extraction devices, air jets and brushes designed for the purpose. They will also recommend using a specialist sanitiser to protect the system after cleaning.

You can download HVCA best practice guide here:

[TR/19 best practice standard](#)

For general information on Sick Building Syndrome download the HSE's PDF guide:

http://www.hse.gov.uk/foi/internalops/fod/oc/300-399/311_2.pdf

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