

Prevent the spread of communicable disease

Ventilation and air circulation

Public health experts advise that moving activities outdoors wherever possible can minimize the spread of communicable disease. For indoor activities, you can improve indoor air quality by supplying outdoor air, which will help remove and dilute contaminants that naturally accumulate in indoor settings, especially in well-sealed buildings.

Can communicable disease spread through ventilation systems?

At this time, there is no evidence that a building's ventilation system, in good operating condition, contributes to the spread of communicable disease.

What can I do to make sure my ventilation system is operating properly?

Employers must ensure that heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems are designed, operated, and maintained as per standards and specifications for ongoing comfort of workers ([Part 4 of the OHS Regulation](#)).

Make sure preventive maintenance is conducted (for example, regular filter changes and inspection of critical components).

Make sure the system is properly balanced. Verify that the system meets its design conditions for air flow, temperature, pressure drop noise, and vibration.

How can I ensure the healthiest indoor air quality in my workplace?

Reduce air recirculation and increase the outdoor air intake as much as possible while maintaining comfortable indoor temperature and humidity. Make sure outdoor air dampers are operating properly.

Do not turn off the ventilation system while the building is occupied. After working hours or on weekends, consider turning the system down, rather than turning it off, if you wish to save power.

What can I do to improve ventilation if I don't have an HVAC system for my workplace?

If feasible, open windows and doors to promote air circulation.

When advised by Public Health, post [occupancy limits](#) to allow for adequate physical distancing in every room. Don't allow overcrowding.

Air cleaning devices that have a HEPA filter will reduce particles in the air. You can use them in rooms with poor air circulation.

If you're using portable fans or air conditioning units, make sure they're set up to avoid blowing air directly from one person's breathing zone to other occupants of a room. Avoid horizontal cross breezes. Instead, set up devices so air flow moves downward from the ceiling.

What about ventilation in vehicles?

Workers using company vehicles should turn the vents or air conditioning controls to allow outdoor air to flow in. Do not set the vents to recirculate.

Leave windows partially open to allow as much outdoor air as possible into the vehicle.

Is there anything special I have to do to my ventilation system after a building has been unoccupied?

If the building has been unoccupied for a period of time, make sure your system has a thorough inspection before it's put back into operation. If your building system includes a cooling tower, you must assess the risk of *Legionella contamination* and disinfect your system as required.

HVAC maintenance workers are required to follow their usual safe work procedures, including the use of personal protective equipment normally worn to conduct maintenance. No special cleaning or disinfecting of the system is necessary when usual safe work procedures are followed.