

University of Louisville - Housing

Indoor Air Quality and Promoting Healthy Living Conditions in Residence Halls:

Maintaining a satisfactory and healthy indoor environment and good indoor air quality in our highly-variable Kentucky climate requires a joint effort by UofL staff and residence hall residents. No heating or air conditioning system is able to eliminate all pollen, dust and allergens; therefore, certain maintenance and housekeeping practices must be utilized to reduce humid conditions and prevent microbial growth, such as mold and mildew within university buildings. Maintaining cleanliness in the residence hall living environment is essential for healthy air quality because microbial growth, such as mold and mildew, grows and thrives in wet or humid conditions, including those created by food or other organic materials containing moisture, wet towels, wet clothing, water intrusion, or spills which are not cleaned up immediately. Mold or mildew growth can occur within 24-48 hours of a spill of any liquid or water intrusion, so clean-up of spills or reporting of water intrusion must be done promptly.

University of Louisville Housing will conduct health and safety inspections of residence halls and rooms on a quarterly basis. They will respond as needed to residence halls to inspect and address any indoor air quality (IAQ) concerns. Housing will communicate and work with the custodial staff, Physical Plant and the Department of Environmental Health & Safety as needed to address any HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning), cleaning or indoor air quality issues in residence halls. Housing will communicate investigation and/or remediation progress with residents in resolving their IAQ concerns.

University of Louisville Physical Plant will take reasonable steps to see that HVAC systems are operating properly and capable of maintaining temperatures at 73 degrees. Physical Plant will check and perform filter changes in fan coil units at least every 6 months. Physical Plant also will investigate and monitor the mechanical rooms, basements and sub-basements, as well as the underground tunnel system for any moisture concerns bi-weekly. Physical Plant will respond to reports of water leaks and intrusion when notified by the Housing staff.

University of Louisville Department of Environmental Health & Safety (DEHS) will work with Housing and Physical Plant as needed to perform resident and staff interviews and indoor air quality investigations to develop a plan to assist in locating and remediating the sources of residents' IAQ concerns.

Campus Residents' Responsibilities:

Follow the 3 Cs: Cleaning, Climate and Communication

1st "C" is CLEANING:

Because microbial growth thrives in wet or humid conditions, cleanliness in the residence hall living environment can assist in improving air quality and promoting a healthy and comfortable living environment free of pests and insects. Items such as wet towels or clothing and oils or residue in leftover food containers and spilled drinks can be a medium for microbial growth. For these reasons, the following responsibilities have been established for all residence hall residents:

1. You are responsible for cleaning your residence hall room or apartment. Maintain your residence in a responsible fashion that does not promote unhealthy conditions for you or your neighbors. Health and safety inspections will be performed randomly by Housing.
 - a. Empty your trash regularly.
 - b. Hang damp or wet towels, bath mats, clothing, or other items immediately and allow items to dry completely to prevent microbial growth and musty odors.
 - c. Clean any spills immediately and thoroughly.
 - d. Vacuum carpet or rugs, sweep floors and dust your room regularly.
2. Pets are not allowed in residence halls, with the exception of service animals and one fish tank that is less than 10 gallons per residence hall room.
3. Food preparation and consumption can attract pests and insects. Avoid leaving open food containers out, seal all containers after use and refrigerate perishable foods. Dispose of used food containers and food scraps regularly to prevent attracting pests and insects and promoting the growth of mold. Keep refrigerators tightly closed.
4. Do not allow mildew to accumulate in your baths and shower stalls. Report any mold or mildew in baths and kitchens immediately.
5. Cleaning of community bathrooms is the responsibility of Housing Custodial Services unless you are otherwise notified. Report any mold or mildew immediately through the maintenance system, to your RA or to the front desk staff.

2nd "C" is CLIMATE:

Controlling room climate is essential to the success of managing indoor air quality and comfort. Moisture and humidity provide conditions which are favorable for microbial growth. UofL's Physical Plant strives to maintain optimal levels of humidity and temperature. Residence Hall residents are expected to assist Physical Plant with this effort by following the guidelines below:

1. If the windows are operable then it is important to KEEP WINDOWS CLOSED when the air conditioning is running. Some buildings have the resident room windows secured to better control the environmental conditions; do not open secured windows. Tampering with the secured windows and opening them may result in a damages charge. The condensation created during cooling season by open windows (hot air) mixing with conditioned HVAC air (cool air) indoors is capable of creating significant mold and moisture problems within the HVAC system and the residence hall room or apartment.
2. Close blinds early in the day to prevent the sun from heating the room. Turn off all lights when leaving the room.

3. Do not tamper with the HVAC unit. Contact the Housing Office or a staff member in your hall for assistance with temperature or humidity issues or water intrusion.
4. Do not block the HVAC air supply or return air vents or doors where the units are located. Reduced air flow to the HVAC system can result in excess moisture and promote mold growth within the system and dorm rooms.
5. Bathroom exhaust fans should be kept running during and after showering to help remove moisture from the air
6. Use bath mats to help absorb water after showering or bathing.
7. Hang damp or wet towels, bath mats and any wet clothing articles to allow for thorough drying after use to prevent mold, mildew or musty odors. Do not hang damp or wet items over the furniture in the room or closet doors.
8. Liquid-filled furniture is not permitted because of the extra weight and danger of damage to property.
9. Natural trees are not permitted in any of the residence halls
10. Follow these refrigerator tips:
 - a. Keep refrigerator doors tightly closed. Failure to secure refrigerator doors may result in defrosting of the freezer and may cause leaking onto the floor.
 - b. When defrosting refrigerators, take steps to prevent water from getting on carpeting, rugs or floors. Clean up spills immediately to prevent water damage or microbial growth. Refrigerators should be defrosted on a regular basis. Residents may place refrigerators in the shower areas where there are drains to defrost the freezer as needed as long as it doesn't prevent other students from using the facilities.
 - c. Refrigerators must be emptied of contents and defrosted before leaving for winter break or other long breaks.
11. Please note that you will be responsible for correcting conditions within your room or apartments that are designated as your responsibility, and as deemed reasonably necessary.
Tampering with units or secured windows or failure to report problems with moisture may result in a residence hall policy violation.

3rd "C" is COMMUNICATION:

1. Communication of any leaks or water intrusion to Housing is required immediately, as it only takes 24-48 hours for mold or mildew growth.
2. Housing should always be the initial contact for indoor air quality or water intrusion issues. Water intrusion issues should be reported IMMEDIATELY to your RA or the Housing Staff on call.

If you experience an issue after the Housing office is closed, find the RA on call in your hall and report it to that staff member. They will report it as an urgent issue for response before the next work day.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY CONTACT PHONE DIRECTORY

FOR RESIDENCE HALL RESIDENTS:

Housing – (502) 852-6636 (General Information)