

Indoor Air Quality

Indoor Air Quality - Legislation

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What does Canadian legislation state about the concentration of contaminants in indoor air for non-industrial workplaces?

Many Canadian jurisdictions do not have specific legislation that deals with indoor air quality issues in non-industrial workplaces. In the absence of such legislation, the "general duty clause" applies. This clause, common to all Canadian occupational health and safety legislation, states that an employer must provide a safe and healthy workplace. Thus, making sure the air is of good quality is the employer's duty.

However, there are often ventilation and other requirements that apply to indoor air in occupational health and safety legislation as well as from applicable Building Codes or other standard setting organizations such as the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Group, and the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE).

Several organizations* have published recommended guidelines for indoor air quality. For example, the Government of Canada has prepared a number of publications on [air quality](#). Note that [indoor air reference limits](#) (IARLs) have been published by Health Canada, and other organizations. Other guidelines recommend that contaminants be kept at or below one tenth of their listed OEL.

In addition, IAQ is stated or implied in most building codes as design and operation criteria. Building codes and health and safety legislation in Canada and the U.S. generally refer to a version of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers* (ASHRAE) Standard 62.1-Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality (or previous versions), or other acceptable standards.


Please see the OSH Answers [Indoor Air Quality—General](#) for more information.

*We have mentioned these organizations as a means of providing a potentially useful referral. You should contact these organizations directly for more information.

Where is ventilation related to indoor air listed in legislation?

A summary of legislation concerning indoor air quality in non-industrial situations is provided below. **This list does not cite the exact text of each section and other legislation may apply.** In all cases, consult with your jurisdiction to confirm what legislation applies in your situation, and that the most current legislation is applied. A list of contact information for all [Canadian occupational health and safety jurisdictions](#) is available.

Table 1: Summary of regulation and guidelines on indoor air quality (IAQ) or ventilation

Jurisdiction	Legislation Title	Section NOTE: Other legislation may apply.	Related Publications
Federal	Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations	Division III, HVAC systems Sections 2.20 to 2.27	Indoor Air Quality in Office Buildings: A Technical Guide. Health Canada
Alberta	Occupational Health and Safety Code	Part 26 – Ventilation systems	Indoor air quality tool kit
British Columbia	Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, B.C. Reg. 296/97 	Part 4, Sections 4.70 to 4.80 Indoor Air Quality Part 5, Sections 5.60 to 5.71 Ventilation Part 5, Sections 5.72 to 5.75 Internal Combustion Engines (when operating indoors)	Indoor Air Quality: A Guide for Building Owners, Managers, and Occupants
Manitoba	Workplace Safety and Health Regulation, Man. Reg. 217/2006	Part 4 General Workplace Requirements, Sections 4.1 to 4.3	
New Brunswick	General Regulation - Occupational Health and Safety Act, N.B. Reg. 91-191	Part III Indoor Air Quality, Section 19 to 25.2	Air Quality.
Newfoundland and Labrador	Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2012, N.L.R. 5/12	Part VI Occupational Health Requirements, Section 45	
Northwest Territories	Occupational Health and Safety	Part 6 General Health Requirements,	Office Accommodation: Fit-up Technical

	Regulations, R-039-2015	Sections 68 to 74, 81 (smoking)	Standards and Criteria by Public Works and Services NWT
Nova Scotia	Occupational Safety General Regulations	Part 4 - Ventilation, Lighting, Sanitation and Accommodation, Sections 15	
Nunavut	Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, R-003-2016	Part 6 General Health Requirements, Sections 68 to 74, 81 (smoking)	
Ontario	Industrial Establishment Regulation, R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 851	Part III Industrial Hygiene Section 127	Ventilation Inspection and Report for Health Care and Residential Facilities
Prince Edward Island	Occupational Health and Safety Act General Regulations, EC180/87	Part 11 – Ventilation 11.1 to 11.11	
Quebec	Regulation respecting occupational health and safety under the Act respecting occupational health and safety	Division V, Air Quality Section 39 Division XI, Ventilation and Heating, Sections 101 to 114	
Saskatchewan	Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 (c. S-15.1, Reg 10)	Part VI General Health Requirements, Sections 6-1 to 6-5, 6-14 (smoking), 21-7 (protection of certain workers)	Indoor Air Quality Indoor Air Quality: Investigating Concerns
Yukon	Occupational Health and Safety and Regulations	Occupational Health and Safety and Regulations, Section	

	Occupational Health Regulations	126 Occupational Health Regulations, Section 7 Ventilation	
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