

WARNING SIGNS OF SICK BUILDING SYNDROME & MCS

BUILDING OCCUPANTS SHOULD LOOK OUT FOR ANY COMBINATION OF THE SYMPTOMS THAT OCCUR TOGETHER WHENEVER THEY SPEND TIME IN THE BUILDING AND GO AWAY WHEN THEY LEAVE. THE MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS OF SICK BUILDING SYNDROME ARE:

- ⌘ SINUS PAIN
- ⌘ HOARSENESS
- ⌘ COUGH, SORE THROAT
- ⌘ BURNING EYES, NOSE
- ⌘ FATIGUE
- ⌘ DIFFICULTY CONCENTRATING
- ⌘ HEADACHE
- ⌘ ACHING MUSCLES AND/OR JOINTS

⌘ UNLIKE A COLD OR FLU, SYMPTOMS DO NOT CLEAR UP WITHIN DAYS

⌘ AFTER WEEKS OR MONTHS OF EXPOSURE, SYMPTOMS MAY BECOME CHRONIC AND ONLY GET BETTER AFTER A LONG TIME AWAY FROM THE BUILDING.

⌘ **SBS-LIKE SYMPTOMS MAY BEGIN TO DEVELOP IN RESPONSE TO COMMON CHEMICAL EXPOSURES OUTSIDE THE BUILDING (SUCH AS PAINT, PERFUME, GASOLINE, AND CLEANING PRODUCTS): THIS IS KNOWN AS MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY OR MCS.**

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RIGHTS OF CHEMICALLY-INJURED EMPLOYEES

⌘ **Right to timely investigation of health complaints and resolution of compensation claims**

⌘ **Right to not be harassed or discriminated against in job assignments and promotions**

⌘ **Right to job security, integrity and reasonable accommodation**

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REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CHEMICALLY-INJURED EMPLOYEES

MANY EMPLOYEES WHO DEVELOP SICK BUILDING SYNDROME OR MULTIPLE CHEMICAL SENSITIVITY CAN CONTINUE WORKING PROVIDED THAT THEY CAN OBTAIN REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FROM THEIR EMPLOYER. THIS IS THEIR LEGAL RIGHT UNDER THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. SUCH ACCOMMODATIONS SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED QUICKLY TO PREVENT TOTAL DISABILITY AND MAY INCLUDE:

⌘ **CONTROLLING EXPOSURES:** Restricting or banning the use of toxic office supplies, cleaning products, and pesticides in the affected person(s) immediate work area(s) and in common areas through which they must pass; requiring the use of less toxic alternatives.

⌘ **INCREASING OUTSIDE AIR:** Via maximum ventilation and provision of window(s) that open, activated charcoal HEPA air filters, and/or potted plants that improve air quality by eating up volatile organic compounds (contact the Plants for Clean Air Council, 410-956-9036).

⌘ **ALTERNATIVE WORKSPACES:** Relocation to another less toxic work area (usually in another building); to a home office with all necessary equipment (if reasonable accommodation of the original work area is impossible or insufficient); or some combination, known as "Flexiplace" or "Telework."

⌘ **JOB RESTRUCTURING** (to eliminate tasks that involve chemical exposures): This should be pursued if none of the above are feasible or adequate. This is sometimes needed for secretarial and clerical workers who may develop sensitivity to toxic office supplies like carbonless copy paper.

FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT YOUR UNION OR MCS REFERRAL & RESOURCES, 410-889-6600
See also: Building Air Quality, by US EPA, CDC & NIOSH, December 1991, ISBN 0-16-035919-8