



# Clark Seif Clark Environmental Newsletter

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May 2017



Every day, Clark Seif Clark professionals are deployed across the nation helping both large and small customers resolve health & safety, industrial hygiene, environmental and indoor air quality issues.

At a moment's notice, Clark Seif Clark can send their experts anywhere they are needed. No matter if it's in response to a hurricane, wildfire, flood, tornado, or other natural disaster, Clark Seif Clark is ready to help and can respond in no time at all.

## Construction Projects in Occupied Buildings and Indoor Environmental Quality

Virtually every residential, commercial and institutional property will undergo some type of remodeling, renovation or construction activity during their usable lifetime. Frequently, property owners and managers do not have the ability, luxury or foresight to completely or partially vacate these buildings slated for disturbance.

Construction activities in an occupied home, school or building can present a range of indoor environmental quality (IEQ) concerns and result in potential occupant and construction worker health issues if the proper precautions are not utilized. The resultant IEQ issues are often caused by the release of airborne particulates, biological contaminants and/or gases.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that particulate material, such as dusts and fibers, are likely to be produced during construction and renovation activities. Nontoxic dusts are irritants and can exacerbate lung conditions such as asthma and chronic obstructive lung disease. Materials that contain fibers, such as fiberglass composite materials or insulation, can irritate the skin, eyes and respiratory tract. Toxic dusts, containing asbestos, polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) or lead, can cause serious long-term health effects. Chronic dampness from prior water intrusions can lead to increased bacteria, mold and other

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microbes. If not handled properly, these microbial-contaminated materials could disperse into the air and other parts of the building.

"At Clark Seif Clark, we've witnessed numerous avoidable incidents where contracting firms released environmentally significant materials into indoor spaces during construction projects," said Derrick A. Denis, V.P. of Indoor Environmental Quality at Clark Seif Clark (CSC). "By the time these preventable problems are recognized and rectified, the end result for the owner and the construction firm often include injured occupants, exposed workers, damaged reputations and significant cost impacts. These may include regulatory citations, insurance deductibles, attorney fees, expedited environmental testing costs, accelerated remediation fees and costly project delays. In many cases, the building is evacuated as a result of the improper handling of environmental issues, which is the situation the owner and contractor were trying to avoid in the first place. These needless risks, costs and headaches could have been prevented if qualified environmental professionals were called in to assess the building before construction work began and to monitor the ongoing work to ensure IEQ controls were in place and functioning."

CSC offers comprehensive indoor environmental quality assessments, inspections, audits, testing and monitoring services before, during and after construction activities. They also recently sponsored a video about IEQ in occupied buildings undergoing construction that can be seen here:



To learn more about this or other indoor air quality, industrial hygiene, environmental, health and safety testing services, please visit [www.csceng.com](http://www.csceng.com) , email [csc@csceng.com](mailto:csc@csceng.com) or call (800) 807-1118.

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**Is It Safe?**

Identifying Asthma Triggers at Work and in the Home

This time of year is the peak season for many allergy and asthma sufferers, making the month of May the ideal time to recognize Asthma Awareness Month and World Asthma Day, which took place on May 2nd.

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that affects over 24 million people in the United States, including more than 6 million children. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that 9 people die each day due to asthma and that the condition costs the nation \$56 billion a year.

During an asthma attack, people may experience coughing, chest tightness, wheezing and trouble breathing according to the CDC. The attack happens in the body's airways, which are the paths that carry air to the lungs. As the air moves through the lungs, the airways become smaller. During an asthma attack, the sides of the airways in the lungs swell and the airways shrink.

For people diagnosed with asthma, it's important to understand that there are a number of known asthma triggers that can cause an attack that are frequently found in both indoor and outdoor environments. Common triggers listed by the CDC include tobacco smoke, dust mites, outdoor air pollution, cockroach allergen, animal dander, mold, pollen, smoke from burning wood or grass, and breathing various chemicals. Fortunately, there are indoor environmental and occupational testing services available to identify a wide range of these asthma triggers. If test results confirm that elevated levels of these substances are present, efforts can then be implemented to eliminate or mitigate their presence.

Helping asthmatics identify and resolve environmental asthma triggers in homes, schools and businesses are the industrial hygiene and building science professionals at Clark Seif Clark. They also recently sponsored a video about what happens during an asthma attack that can be seen here:



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**About Clark Seif Clark:** CSC was established in 1989 to help clients in both the public and private sectors address environmental issues. CSC is a leading provider of these services with multiple offices along the western seaboard and southwest. The company believes in science-based protocols and has a strong background in engineering making them the preferred environmental consultants to healthcare facilities, architects, schools, builders, contractors, developers and real estate professionals.