

Sick Building Syndrome

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'Opkins asks can I contribute an article pertaining to 'air. Thinking about the contributors from the Construction Group I was quite surprised, as we are all decidedly diminutive in follicle definition. Then I realised he really did mean air... But there is a link, honestly - keep reading.

I heard this week that Riyadh was a strange place to be, as you had to go indoors to get a breath of fresh air. How wrong that statement was. More and more we are hearing in the media, and encroaching into our working life, about sick building syndrome (SBS) and its effects on office employees and costs to employers. But what is it and what can be done about it?

People spend 90% of their time indoors, and indoor air quality (IAQ) is frequently worse than that outside. According to the World Health Organisation, IAQ problems affect 30% of all public buildings. The organization statisticians estimate the cost of Build-



ing Related Illnesses amount to 0.5% - 1.0% of gross national product. In the UK this would amount to a staggering 355 - 710 million pounds per annum.

Symptoms associated with SBS - headaches, sneezing, sore eyes, and respiratory problems, affect us all at some time, and in Kingdom very frequently, and building related illnesses such as Legionnaires Disease can prove fatal. The prime causes of SBS are suspended particulate, off-gassing from paint, carpets, electronic equipment, and microbial growth in air passages.

Many companies worldwide are addressing these problems, improving product quality, reducing

risk areas and improving air filtration technology. Air filtration products are now available with an anti microbial built in to inhibit the growth of bacteria and fungi at the initial source of air intake to the building.

Internally, high efficiency filters can prevent

particle bypass down to 0.3 microns in size, which is vitally important, as 92% of all particles in a typical tested sample have a diameter less than 0.5 microns. The minimum particle size that is visible to the naked eye is 10 microns and only 50 particles out of every million are visible to the naked eye. So unlike the traffic in Riyadh you cannot see the things that are going to cause you harm.

And to put it all into relative perspective here comes the link as promised...

The average diameter of a human hair is 59 microns! See chaps, size does matter sometimes...

We need your articles!

You are reading the RGBB Newsletter, which we hope you find interesting. Our newsletter is dependant on personal contributions and articles. We would like to hear from anyone who is interested in sharing their views or information to the British business community.

Many of you have lots of interesting stories and information to share so let us know by February ready for the next Newsletter due in March.

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