

Indoor Air Quality Report

Performed at:

**Somerset Berkley High School
625 County Street
Somerset, MA 02726**

Prepared for:

**Somerset School Department
625 County Street
Somerset, MA 02726
Attention: Carlos Campos**

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DATE: August 23, 2020

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

As requested by the Town of Somerset, MAC Services, LLC (MAC) completed an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) evaluation of the Somerset Berkley High School located at 625 County Street in Somerset, MA.

Mr. Joseph Cooney, representing MAC Services, LLC, performed the evaluation on August 20th and 21st, 2020. Mr. Cooney is a Senior Environmental Technician with over 12 years of experience in the Environmental Consulting Industry and has completed dozens of Indoor Air Quality assessments in a diverse range of environments including Child Care Facilities, manufacturing facilities, and large retail buildings, as well as residential buildings. Mr. Cooney was assisted by Field Technician's Brendon Cooney and Brent Rezendes. In conducting this evaluation, MAC performed the following tasks:

- Conducted interview with facility personnel.
- Conducted a visual inspection of the specified interior areas to detect any suspect discoloration of building materials.
- Measured Relative Humidity and Temperature.
- Utilized instantaneous reading equipment to obtain data measuring oxygen levels (O₂), carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen sulfide (H₂S), Lower Explosive Limit (LEL- methane gases) and over 170 Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) including but not limited to Formaldehyde, Ethyl Benzene, Tetrachloroethylene, Trichloroethylene, Vinyl Chloride, Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) and Naphthalene (smells like mothballs). Data was collected randomly throughout all areas of the building as well as outdoors. Appendix A presents these Direct Reading Environmental Measurements.
- Conducted a Mold Determination Survey.

2.0 FACILITY DESCRIPTION

The space subject to the IAQ evaluation at 625 County Street in Somerset, MA appears to be in excellent condition and recently constructed. The Somerset Berkley High School campus consists of a three-story building along with various sprawling outdoor areas for athletic and recreational purposes. The building is approximately 225,000 square feet in total area. The facility is used to educate students in grades 9 through 12.

The building construction is made up of gypsum board walls with skim coat plaster. Some walls are made up of CMU block. Ceilings are a combination of suspended 2' x 2' ceiling tile and gypsum board with plaster on some areas. The floors are mostly VCT with some areas having carpet cover. All materials appear to be homogenous throughout. Ceramic tile is used in the bathrooms. A rubber flooring material is used in the stairwells. Mostly non-porous materials used throughout the building.

3.0 OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSION

During the survey the individual rooms were kept isolated by closing the doors. The HVAC system continued to function.

There was no building exterior integrity breakdown observed. No visible signs of mold were noted in any of the areas where sampling took place. There were no obvious odors detected. There were no areas of plumbing breakdown observed.

The weather outdoors was mostly sunny, humid, and warm with the temperature approximately 90 Degrees (F) and Humidity level at 49% at the time of Survey activity on 8/20/20 & 8/21/20.

3.1 Occupied space

All areas subject to sampling appeared to be occupied in general with facility workers coming and going within the rooms throughout the facility.

4.0 DIRECT READING ENVIRONMENTAL MEASUREMENTS

MAC performed direct-reading environmental measurements, utilizing a Multi-Rae Five Gas Meter. Measurements were taken outdoors and at numerous indoor locations. MAC measured oxygen levels as well as hydrogen sulfide, LEL (methane gases), carbon monoxide and multiple volatile organic compounds. Measurements were collected over a period of two days during the regular day time school hours and obtained in three (3) separate rounds of collection taken from the same locations each round. There were a total of One hundred and Twenty-Four (124) samples obtained from Forty (40) collection stations throughout the interior.

Appendix A presents direct reading environmental measurements obtained during data collection surveys on 8/20/20 & 08/21/20 in the specified areas.

4.1 Oxygen

NIOSH (National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) defines an oxygen deficient atmosphere containing oxygen levels less than 19.5% and an oxygen-enriched atmosphere as containing more than 23.5%.

Individuals exposed to an atmosphere of less than 19.5% oxygen would exhibit decreased ability to work strenuously, impair coordination and may induce symptoms in persons with coronary, pulmonary, or circulatory problems.

MAC measured the Oxygen levels to be consistently at 20.9%.

4.2 Carbon Monoxide (CO)

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless toxic gas produced by the incomplete combustion of solid, liquid and gaseous fuels. Elevated indoor carbon monoxide concentrations may be a result of combustion sources indoors or the introduction of combustion products from outdoors into the indoor air. In the absence of indoor sources, indoor carbon monoxide concentrations are usually less than, or equal to outdoor concentrations. ASHRAE Standard 62-1999 recommends an upper limit for carbon monoxide of 9 ppm as a 24-hour average, and 35 ppm as a 1-hour average.

MAC measured the concentrations of all samples obtained of CO to be well below all upper limit thresholds.

4.3 Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S)

Hydrogen sulfide is the chemical compound H₂S. This colorless, toxic and flammable gas is responsible for the foul odor of rotten eggs and flatulence. It often results from the bacterial breakdown of sulfates in organic matter in the absence of oxygen, such as in swamps and sewers (anaerobic digestion). Hydrogen Sulfide is a highly toxic and flammable gas. Being heavier than air, it tends to accumulate at the bottom of poorly ventilated spaces. Although very pungent at first, it quickly deadens the sense of smell. The OSHA recommended permissible exposure limit (PEL) for hydrogen sulfide is 20 ppm.

MAC measured the concentrations of all H₂S samples obtained to be within acceptable levels.

4.4 Lower Explosive Limit (LEL)

The Lower Explosive Limit of a gas or vapor, is the limiting concentration (in air) that is needed for the gas to ignite and explode. There are two explosive limits for any gas or vapor, the lower explosive limit and the upper explosive limit (UEL). At concentrations in air below the LEL there is not enough fuel to continue an explosion; at concentrations above the UEL the fuel (gas or vapor) has displaced so much air that there is not enough oxygen to begin a reaction. Concentrations of explosive gases are often reported in terms of percent of lower explosive limit (% LEL). The EPA recommends the action level to be greater than 10%.

MAC measured the LEL % concentrations to be well below the EPA recommended action level.

4.5 Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)

MAC measured for multiple VOC's. There were minimal concentrations of any listed VOC's. The list is extensive and can be furnished upon request. Included in this list is Carbon Dioxide (CO₂). VOC's are components which, at room temperature, may be released from materials or products in the form of gases. The EPA calls for concentrations of less than 100 PPM (parts per million) for the Criteria Air Pollutants as a guidance.

MAC measured the VOC concentrations to be well below the recommended acceptable levels. Included in the VOC measurements was Carbon Dioxide (CO₂).

4.6 Relative Humidity (RH)

MAC measured for RH in all the targeted areas.

ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2016 recommends that RH levels be maintained to be less than 65% to lessen the likelihood of mold growth while ASHRAE Standard 55-2013 recommends that RH in a occupied space be generally maintained to be less than 80% as it corresponds with acceptable T levels.

MAC measured the indoor RH to be generally less than 60%.

4.7 Temperature (T)

MAC measured for T in all the targeted areas over a time period of approximately 1 hour and 18 minutes.

ASHRAE Standard 55-2013 recommends that for Thermal Environmental conditions for human occupancy comfort purposes, temperature could be from 67 to 82 degrees (F). This range depends on a number of variables including the occupants age, clothing worn and activity level.

MAC measured the indoor Temperatures to be consistently between 70 and 73 degrees (F).

5.0 MOLD ASSESSMENT

5.1 Scope of Work

MAC conducted a mold determination survey including a visual inspection and air sampling for the purpose of determining if elevated levels of mold spore activity exist within the specific areas sampled. A sampling strategy was arrived at by targeting areas most likely to have mold growth based on experience. Those areas are generally where plumbing exist, windows, basement levels and also where ever there may be suspect discoloration on ceilings, walls and floors that was detected during the visual inspection.

The results of Fungal air samples are determined by utilizing a comparative analysis with current conditions outdoors at the time of indoor sampling using Industry Standard guidelines for acceptable levels of mold spore activity. In addition to the outdoor sample, additional samples were collected in the following locations:

- Center of Library
- Room 301 at the windowsill
- Room 310A at interior side sinks
- Room 328 at front windowsill
- Third floor water fountain / Bathroom area at front side of building
- Room 229 at rear windowsill
- Room 203A middle windowsill
- Room 208 at sinks on exterior side
- Room 216 at center
- Auditorim on stage next to stained carpet
- Upper level GYM track at front window
- Cable TV Studio
- Water Fountain / Bathroom area on second floor next to TV Studio
- Room 124A at rear windowsill
- First floor East end entrance
- Room 114 at sink next to Room 112 entrance
- First floor office area in Kitchen
- Room 127A at front
- Room 134 on windowsill at front of room
- Room 141 at windowsill
- Fitness GYM
- Center of cafeteria

- Room 131A
- Boys Team room
- Kitchen at wash sinks
- Girls PE room
- Trainers room

5.2 Discussion

Fungal bio-aerosol monitoring is the sampling of spores from the air onto a media slide. Utilizing a microscope, the spores are then identified at least to genus and counted. Comparisons with outside levels and types indicate whether pathogenic species have been or have become predominate and at what concentration in a particular area.

All mold samples were analyzed by H2O EnviroComp, an EMPAT (Environmental Microbiology Proficiency Analytical Testing) proficient Laboratory located in West Dennis, MA. This evaluation is limited in scope and reflects the levels of fungal contaminants on the day of sampling. Airborne levels of fungal spores will vary naturally and conditions may change in the future which could promote the growth of mold or create other air quality concerns in the interior environment. The industry standard acceptable level of spore counts for most species of mold is generally (1,000 s/cu m). The acceptable level is more stringent for some species of more harmful species such as Chaetomium, (600 s/ cu m) and Stachybotrys (400 s/cu m).

In addition to the threat mold poses against the structural integrity and value of a property, bacterial / fungal magnification or enhancement within a building can lead to a number of health issues. Associated health risks can include respiratory as well as pulmonary symptoms. Some molds produce mycotoxins which can lead to effects on the neurological system. All types of mold are harmful to health to some degree so deciding on action to be taken should not depend on the type of mold rather the overall concentration level of specific mold spores.

The absence of spores and visible colonies does not always insure that no microbiological colonies exist. Colonies may be hidden and spores released sporadically based on environmental conditions, in particular, humidity levels.

The effects of mold spores depend on a number of variables including the pre-existing health of the occupants, the sensitivity level and age of the inhabitants of the space, as well as the type of mold contaminants and concentration levels of mold spore counts. MAC services utilizes several sources of Industry guidelines when interpreting air sample analytical data, including the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and IICRC (Institute of Inspections Cleaning and Restoration Certification) organizations.

5.3 Conclusion

The visual inspection did not detect any evidence of mold growth. The analytical results appeared to be well within the Industry Standard acceptable levels for all samples obtained. The sample in the Water Fountain / Bathroom area next to the TV Studio did have a slightly elevated count of Cladosporium type mold but that count was still well below the outdoor activity at the time.

Note: Please see the attached Laboratory Analytical Report in Appendix B

5.4 Recommendation

To avoid mold growth in the future, any water intrusion must be remedied by repairing immediately and drying out any resulting affected areas within 48 hours. Maintaining humidity levels below 65% will also assist in controlling mold spore activity.

6.0 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

MAC's conclusions and recommendations are based on visual inspections as well as scientific data obtained and presented in this report.

With regards to all non-mold assessment measurements, there is no scientific evidence apparent that would indicate an unhealthy work environment exists as it relates to Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) in the areas referenced in this document at the time sampling was conducted. All measurements acquired were well within acceptable limits of guideline levels including OSHA, NIOSH and ASHRAE. In fact, the levels for the measurables were not even detectable.

Inspection of the HVAC filtration system showed a range of filter cleanliness. It appeared that the frequency of changing the interior filters depends on where they are located in relation to activity and the amount of foot traffic in that area. The last change for the large rooftop units was reportedly this past April. The unit located at the Northwest corner appeared to be significantly much dirtier than all the other units which were in good shape considering they were due for a change out. There was no apparent reason the Northwest area Unit was dirtier. This Unit should be changed at least every 3 months going forward.

Continue to maintain the building HVAC filtration system changing the interior filters in the busy areas more frequently and document the maintenance activities as they take place. The filter change dates should be recorded and kept on file.

Any water intrusion events should be remedied within 48 hours of occurrence.

This report submitted by:



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