



# Good Air Quality is Good Business

Indoor air quality is one of the leading challenges facing hoteliers. Maintaining good quality air is an important part of successful hospitality operations. Why?

- Surveys show that customers appreciate a comfortable environment and will come back more often.
- Regulators like the British Columbia Workers Compensation Board (WCB) have imposed tough new standards for indoor air quality.
- With the spread of smoking by-laws, it is important to find practical ways to accommodate both your smoking and non-smoking customers within your operation.

To address indoor air quality regulations, smoking by-laws and other challenges, every hotelier should consider instituting an effective program to manage the air quality in their properties. A well designed air quality management program should ensure that all departments within a hotel property meet the minimum standard of the Workers Compensation Board's new Indoor Air Quality regulations. The WCB regulations:

1. adopt ventilation rates, temperature and humidity requirements recommended by the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE);
2. require that indoor air quality investigations be conducted and that documentation be retained;
3. require the implementation of preventive maintenance practices to avoid indoor air quality complaints;
4. require that ventilation system specifications and other details be available to the WCB; and
5. require that exposure to environmental tobacco smoke be controlled.

The Canadian public as well as govern-

ments are demanding that the hospitality industry provide acceptable indoor air. While extreme special interest groups campaign for smoking bans, this will not guarantee clean indoor air. It has been shown that smoking is only one of a multitude of causes of poor indoor air and that smoking bans don't stop customers from smoking, they just stop customers from spending. More progressive leaders and a public mood that favours pro-active industry measures rather than regulations are challenging the hospitality industry to develop a program to make the indoor air clean and a monitoring program to ensure it is kept clean.

The hospitality industry has responded to this challenge and developed a specially designed pro-active indoor air quality management program in consultation with the environmental consulting firm of Theodor D. Sterling and Associates. "The Air Quality Initiative" program addresses indoor air quality issues in a cost effective manner and is now being implemented throughout British Columbia. "The Air Quality Initiative" is an ongoing management program which employs a multi-step process to effectively deal with all indicators of air quality including environmental tobacco smoke.

Good quality indoor air is achieved starting with an assessment of your system's present performance, developing a program to achieve the required improvement, and then following up with regular monitoring of the ongoing performance to ensure that air quality is within reasonable ranges.

The program includes measurement of the trace elements in the air to determine whether or not your property has acceptable levels. Each public area within your

hotel property, your lounge, cabaret and restaurant, is tested. Each of these departments has different challenges and requires a separate assessment. Ongoing air quality monitoring is a guide to help ensure that your equipment is satisfactory and that your preventive maintenance program is effective.

Our experience has shown that the vast majority of hotel properties have systems that provide good quality indoor air or with minor adjustments will perform properly. We have found that economical systems, carefully designed, installed and well maintained, often out-perform the most expensive, complex equipment on the market. However, if your property requires modifications, the program will provide a referral and pre-qualification process to help you select the consultants, contractors and equipment suppliers that understand the special challenges of providing clean air in hospitality environments.

Air quality challenges facing hoteliers are here to stay. A few short years ago, no one would have foreseen the widespread introduction of indoor air quality regulations and smoking bans. Even now, as governments are questioning the wisdom of employing smoking bans, the public is demanding that the industry provide entertainment venues where the air is clean.

Now more than ever, Good Air Quality is Good Business.

---

*Elia M. Sterling is President of Theodor D. Sterling and Associates Ltd., one of Canada's leading environmental consulting firms, with over 20 years of experience specializing in providing indoor air quality solutions. For more information on the "Air Quality Initiative" call (604) 681-2701.*