

OFFICE WORKERS UPRISING

Issue Number Two

Free

Office Work Can Make You Sick!

As if you didn't already know that, right? But this is different from the usual type of work sickness. This is very physical and very real, and it's caused by the chrome-plated, airtight nightmares some of us work in. These high-tech glass boxes, with their perfectly controlled environments, are also perfect breeding grounds for numerous diseases.

Ever notice how when someone gets a cold in the office, everyone gets a cold? But sometimes the danger is more serious than just a common cold or sinus attack. Lack of fresh air in offices can also spawn the growth of dangerous bacteria and fungi. Headaches, nausea, skin irritation and burning eyes can be caused by some of these bacteria. And even more serious illnesses as well.

State worker Phil Thornton of Portland, Maine developed a growth on his right lung which was revealed after surgery to have been caused by a rare fungus growing in the ventilation system of the building where he worked. It was later discovered that the building was built atop a former dumping ground for gasoline, oil and benzene. Because there were no windows, and no fresh air coming in, the fumes remained trapped inside the offices.

A large percentage of indoor air pollution is caused by bacteria and dirt in air vents. The air flowing through the vents carries the dirt and debris, which office workers then must breathe. In the closed environment of the modern office, where the sun seldom shines and the wind never blows, office workers are being forced to breathe dirt.

Office Workers United calls for the elimination of the Glass Nightmare. Give us windows that open and fresh air to breathe! We demand a natural and healthy environment for office workers. New filters and other gadgets aren't enough. **WE WANT ACCESS TO REAL AIR!**

Office Air Quality Checklist:

___ Is there even a ventilation system in the office? It's hard to believe, but some buildings have no system at all. Check to see if there are air vents or ducts.

___ Is the system on all the time? Often the bosses will shut off the air circulation after 5pm or on weekends, even though there may still be people working (especially building service workers). Test whether the system is working after 5pm by holding a tissue near a vent. If the tissue moves, air is circulating.

___ Is the system continuous or does it go on and off during the day? When the blower stops at regular intervals, pollutants start accumulating. Check the vents with a tissue periodically during the day to find out if your system is on a time cycle.

___ Does each room have a vent? Walk around and make a list of the number of vents per room.

___ Are the vents for supply and exhaust right next to each other? When the two vents are too close, the clean air is sucked out of the room before it has adequately circulated.