



STAFF REPORT INFORMATION ONLY

Clean Air Checklist

Date:	February 1, 2010
To:	Board of Health
From:	Medical Officer of Health
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report responds to a request from the Board of Health at its November 16, 2009 meeting regarding the promotion of a Clean Air Checklist. Toronto Public Health (TPH) supports the actions outlined in the Clean Air Checklist and is currently promoting it in Toronto schools, community health centres and City of Toronto child care centres. As opportunities arise in the future, TPH will continue to promote the Clean Air Checklist in conjunction with programs that complement its goals.

Financial Impact

There are no financial impacts arising from adoption of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At the Board of Health meeting held on November 16, 2009, Councillor Paula Fletcher brought forward a letter for discussion that she had sent to the chair and members of the Board of Health dated October 13, 2009. The letter outlined information on a new Clean Air Checklist developed by Maria Miller with support from the South Riverdale Community Health Centre, the Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition and the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit. Councillor Fletcher requested that the Board of Health consider forwarding this resource to local community health groups.

The Board of Health referred the letter from Councillor Fletcher to the Medical Officer of Health for a report to the Board of Health.

Supporting Documentation

Letter from Councillor Paula Fletcher

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-25024.pdf>)

Clean Air Checklist

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2009/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-25025.pdf>)

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Indoor air is a largely unregulated source of exposure to a variety of contaminants. Exposure to various indoor air contaminants is believed to increase the risks of developing asthma or other respiratory and health problems. Children are particularly susceptible to the health effects of indoor air pollutants due to the vulnerability of their developing lungs. Contaminant levels in indoor dust are of increasing concern and present a significant exposure pathway for children. Given that children spend approximately 90% of their time indoors, special care should be taken to optimize the environmental quality in the places where they spend their time, such as schools, child care facilities and community centres.

Toronto Public Health (TPH) develops resources to improve the environmental health of children, which includes addressing indoor air quality. In the development and marketing of these resources, TPH collaborates with several community organizations, including the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment (CPCHE) and the South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC). The SRCHC has been actively involved in indoor air quality issues and is working with schools in the South Riverdale area to promote asthma-friendly practices and policies through the Public Health School Asthma Project, funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. As part of this work, they have collaborated with the Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition to produce the Clean Air Checklist to assist teachers in improving the air quality in their classrooms. TPH staff were involved in reviewing the Clean Air Checklist during its development.

COMMENTS

Toronto Public Health supports the actions outlined in the Clean Air Checklist and is currently taking steps to promote it in Toronto schools. In September 2009, the checklist was distributed to the 30 TPH school health liaison nurses for promotion during school visits.

Staff will promote this useful tool to community health centres and City of Toronto child care centres, in addition to continued promotion in schools. Moreover, TPH will include a web link to the checklist from its Healthy Schools and Indoor Air web portals.

The actions outlined in the checklist are consistent with other TPH educational messages, such as those promoted through:

- the fact sheet series for service providers and public health nurses working with families, entitled: *Hidden Exposures, Informing Pregnant Women and Families about harmful environmental exposures*; and
- 20/20 *The Way to Clean Air* energy conservation program for grades 4-6 students.

As opportunities arise in the future, TPH will promote the Clean Air Checklist in conjunction with programs that complement its goals.

CONTACT

Monica Campbell
Manager, Environmental Protection Office
Toronto Public Health
Phone: 416-338-8091
Fax : 416-392-7418
Email : mcampbe2@toronto.ca

Carol Timmings
Interim Director, Planning & Policy
Toronto Public Health
Phone: 416-338-7951
Fax: 416-392-0713
Email: ctimming@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Dr. David McKeown
Medical Officer of Health

REFERENCES

Environmental Threats to Children: Understanding the Risks, Enabling Prevention.
Technical Report, Toronto Public Health (2005)
http://www.toronto.ca/health/hphe/childrens_health_report.htm