

How to pandemic-proof your workplace

As the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) mulls over new standards for building designs and ventilation guidelines in a post-Covid-19 Singapore, here are five steps that building owners and tenants can take to create healthier offices, as recommended by the Singapore Green Building Council.



GOOD LIGHTING

- Harness natural daylight where possible, with artificial lighting as a supplement
- Use motion sensors to eliminate the need to touch light switches
- Opt for energy-efficient lights (no incandescent lights and halogens)



INDOOR AIR QUALITY

- Has a direct impact on employees' respiratory system and health as it affects the air they breathe

- Select low volatile organic compounds (VOC) emission options for office equipment such as printers and keep them away from workstations

- Ensure architectural finishes such as adhesives, paints and coatings used in the office are certified for low VOC content

- Supplement air-conditioning with fans, where possible, which helps in ventilation and air circulation
- Ensure air-con units are connected to the fresh air duct that enables fresh air to be drawn into the office space
- Reduce indoor air recirculation and do regular air purging as recommended by BCA, National Environment Agency and Ministry of Health



INTERIOR LAYOUT AND ACTIVE DESIGN

- Zone the office based on its various activities
- Allow flexibility in employees' work environment as many will most likely spend most of the workday in the office, including mealtimes
- Helps to promote positive mental health in the workplace, as employees have different areas to destress and decompress



BIOPHILIA AND VIEWS

- Indoor greenery such as green walls and large potted plants can help absorb VOCs and cleanse the air
- Having greenery coverage of more than 2% of the office area scores 1 point under the BCA Green Mark for Healthier Workplaces criteria
- Creates a more pleasant working environment for employees



NOISE AND ACOUSTICS

- Have purpose-built phone pods for teleconferencing
- Besides managing noise and office's overall acoustics, standalone pods can help contain the spread of any viruses and allows for effective cleaning and sanitisation