



**First Nations Housing Professionals Association**

L'Association des professionnels de  
l'habitation des Premières Nations

THE HOUSING AND  
WELLNESS PROGRAM



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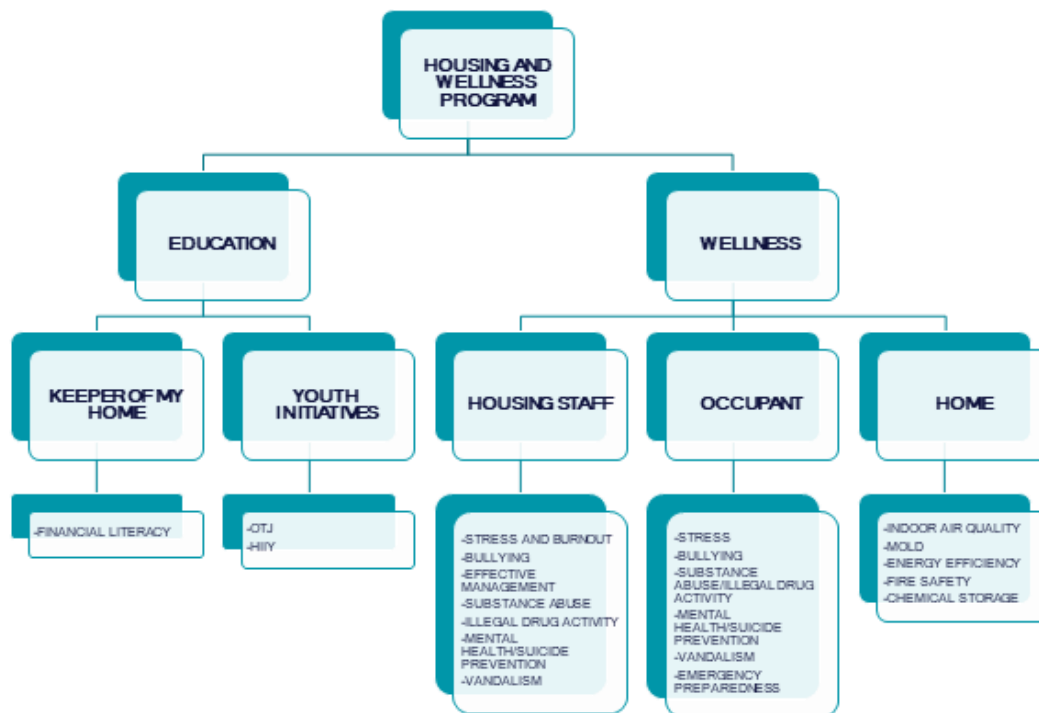


## Introduction



The First Nations Housing Professionals Association (FNHPA) is pleased to offer the Housing and Wellness Program. The purpose of this program is to provide information and guidance to First Nations individuals living on reserve or working in a housing capacity.

The key areas that are addressed are education, through the provision of educational programs, tools, and resources, and wellness as it relates to the mental well-being of First Nations housing staff, occupants, and youth and the wellness of the home itself. Through the delivery of this program, we hope to address issues related to housing, health, and safety.





## 1. Education

Through the provision of educational programs, tools, and resources, we hope to raise awareness of housing, health and safety matters and address the current socio-economic issues experienced by First Nations individuals living on-reserve.

### 1.1 Keeper of My Home

The Keeper of My Home program is a free educational resource that was developed to educate children and youth about the importance of housing and home safety and how it can help improve economic and social conditions. The program intends to create future housing champions and bring about a positive change through a bottom-up approach.

The program is built around the following four themes:

- Traditional teaching of the community
- First Nation housing topics
- Home maintenance
- Home safety

The Keeper of My Home program addresses many of the same areas of concern as the Housing and Wellness Program. These four themes have underlying lessons related to education, as well as wellness.

### 1.2 Financial Literacy

Teaching children and youth about Financial Literacy can instill the knowledge and skills required to effectively transition from living at home to living on their own while they attend post-secondary studies or enter the workforce. This training course will be offered through the lens of a homeowner and a renter's perspective with information on budgeting, saving, investing, rental lease requirements, and more.





## 2. Wellness

Wellness shapes many aspects of our lives and plays a crucial role in our health and well-being. However, it is often neglected, which has led to a lack of available information for First Nations individuals living on reserve.

Through the delivery of tools and resources, we hope to address common issues experienced by First Nations housing staff and tenants related to their mental wellness and the wellness of their homes. Addressing these issues will not only educate people on the importance of wellness but will also promote optimal health and functioning.





### 3. Wellness of the Home

The wellness of the home refers to creating and maintaining a healthy and balanced home. There are numerous factors that impact the wellness of our home, and we are often unaware of many of them. Prioritizing having a healthy home can positively contribute to our physical and mental well-being in many ways. This resource aims to provide First Nations individuals living on-reserve with the knowledge to foster a healthier home.





### 3.1 Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air quality (IAQ) has become an important health and safety concern. Common issues associated with IAQ include improper or inadequately maintained heating and ventilation systems and contamination by construction materials, glues, fibreglass, particle boards, paints, chemicals, etc.

IAQ problems may arise from one or more of the following causes:

- Indoor environment – inadequate temperature, humidity, poor air circulation, ventilation system issues.
- Indoor air contaminants – chemicals, dust, mould or fungi, bacteria, gases, vapours, odours.
- Insufficient outdoor air intake.

Tips to ensure good indoor air quality in your home:

- Vent bathrooms and kitchens
- Store toxic compounds out of the occupiable space
- Minimize combustion sources such as candles and cigarettes
- Leave indoor doors open for being air circulation
- Properly vent fireplaces, wood stoves and other hearth products
- Use a mechanical HVAC system in your home with a filtration system built into the ductwork
- Open windows and doors when outside conditions permit
- Consider using low-emission cleaning products

The following resources are checklists that can be used to self-assess the indoor air quality in a classroom.





## Indoor Air Quality Classroom Checklist

## Air Distribution

Even when sufficient outdoor air enters the school, under-ventilation can occur in areas if the outdoor air is not properly distributed. Air distribution contributes to healthier, cleaner indoor air so it is important to ensure that proper distribution is occurring.

- | Y                        | N                        | N/A                      | Y = statement correct, N = statement is incorrect, N/A = not applicable                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Supply and return air pathways in the existing ventilation system perform as required.    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All occupied spaces have a supply of outdoor air (mechanical system or operable windows). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Supply and return vents are open and unblocked.   |







## Indoor Air Quality Classroom Checklist

### Air Filters

Air filters must be properly selected and regularly replaced to prevent dirt and dust from accumulating in the HVAC system.

Y	N	N/A	Y = statement correct, N = statement is incorrect, N/A = not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Air filters are replaced per maintenance schedule.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ventilation system fans are shut off while replacing filters (to prevent dirt from blowing).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Filter areas are vacuumed before installing new filters.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Air filters are properly installed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Filters are within their service life.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Filters are changed regularly when necessary.





## Indoor Air Quality Classroom Checklist

## Outdoor Air Intakes

Blocked or clogged outdoor air intakes can result in reduced amounts of fresh air, which can lead to stuffy air and health problems from exposure to accumulated pollutants. Proper location of outdoor air intakes can minimize the entrance of contaminated air.

Y	N	N/A	Y = statement correct, N = statement is incorrect, N/A = not applicable
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Locations of all outdoor air intakes are marked on a floor plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outdoor air intakes are clear of obstructions, debris, clogs or covers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ground-level intakes are checked for pollutant sources (dumpsters, loading docks, and bus-idling areas).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rooftop intakes are checked for pollutant sources (plumbing vents, kitchens, toilets, or laboratory exhaust fans).





## Indoor Air Quality Classroom Checklist

### Local Exhaust Fans

Exhaust systems remove contaminated air and odours so it is important to ensure that they are in appropriate locations and are functioning properly.

**Y N N/A Y = statement correct, N = statement is incorrect, N/A = not applicable**

- |                          |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Major pollutant-generating activities are identified. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Location of exhaust fan(s) is known.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Exhaust fans operate properly.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adjacent rooms and/or halls are free of odours.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Exhaust fans in kitchens and restrooms work properly. |





## Indoor Air Quality & COVID-19 Classroom Checklist

### Ventilation

Ventilation has proven to have an important role in reducing the transmission of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. Proper ventilation can decrease the concentration of aerosols that may be suspended in the air, helping reduce the chance of COVID-19 spread.

- | Y                        | N                        | N/A                      | Y = statement correct, N = statement is incorrect, N/A = not applicable                       |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Location of air supply and air return vent is known.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Location of unit ventilators are known.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Air is flowing from the supply vent.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is no vehicle exhaust, kitchen/food, and/or chemical odours in the classroom.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There are no signs of mould or mildew in the classroom.                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unit ventilators are quiet enough to accommodate classroom activities.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Airflow is not diverted or obstructed by any obstacles.                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Unit ventilators/heaters have nothing placed on their tops or obstructing the flow.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is no mechanical ventilation system and windows are the means of ventilation.           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fresh outdoor air is brought in as much as possible (using caution in highly polluted areas). |





### 3.2 Mould

Health Canada considers indoor mould growth to be a significant health hazard. The word mould is a common term referring to fungi that can grow on building materials in homes or other buildings. It is important to know how to identify, address and prevent moisture and mould in your home.

Damp conditions, persistent humidity and poor ventilation are three common sources of mould growth in homes. Taking steps to prevent these circumstances can decrease the risk of health conditions related to mould exposure, such as asthma symptoms or eye and throat irritation.

Ways to prevent mould in your household:

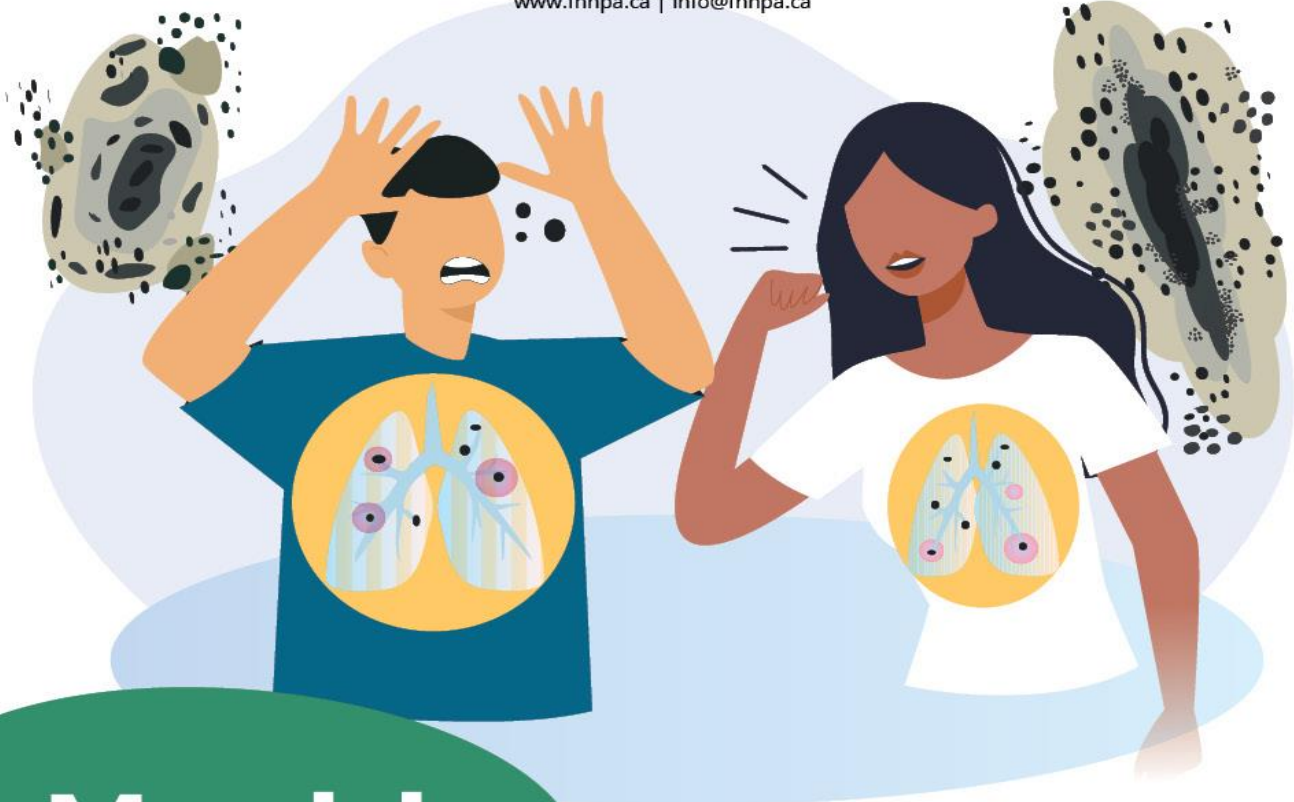
- Look for damp spots in your house
- Use exhaust fans when cooking or showering
- Keep your home well ventilated using windows and fans
- Reduce humidity in your home
- Clean up floor spills immediately
- Keep furniture away from outside walls to increase airflow
- Keep closets and storage spaces clear of clutter
- Leave washing machine door open
- Get professional help for serious contamination problems, such as a flood

Tips to safely clean mould:

- Wear protective gear
- Use soap and water to clean mould on hard surfaces
- Discard absorbent or porous materials that cannot be washed and dried
- If there is a lot of mould, get professional help

The following resources are infographic posters and a checklist to support First Nations individuals living on-reserve when dealing with mould in their homes.





# Mould

## Sources of Mould



**Persistent  
Humidity**



**Leaking  
Pipes**



**Leaking  
Roof**



**Condensation  
Build-up**



**Poor  
Ventilation**

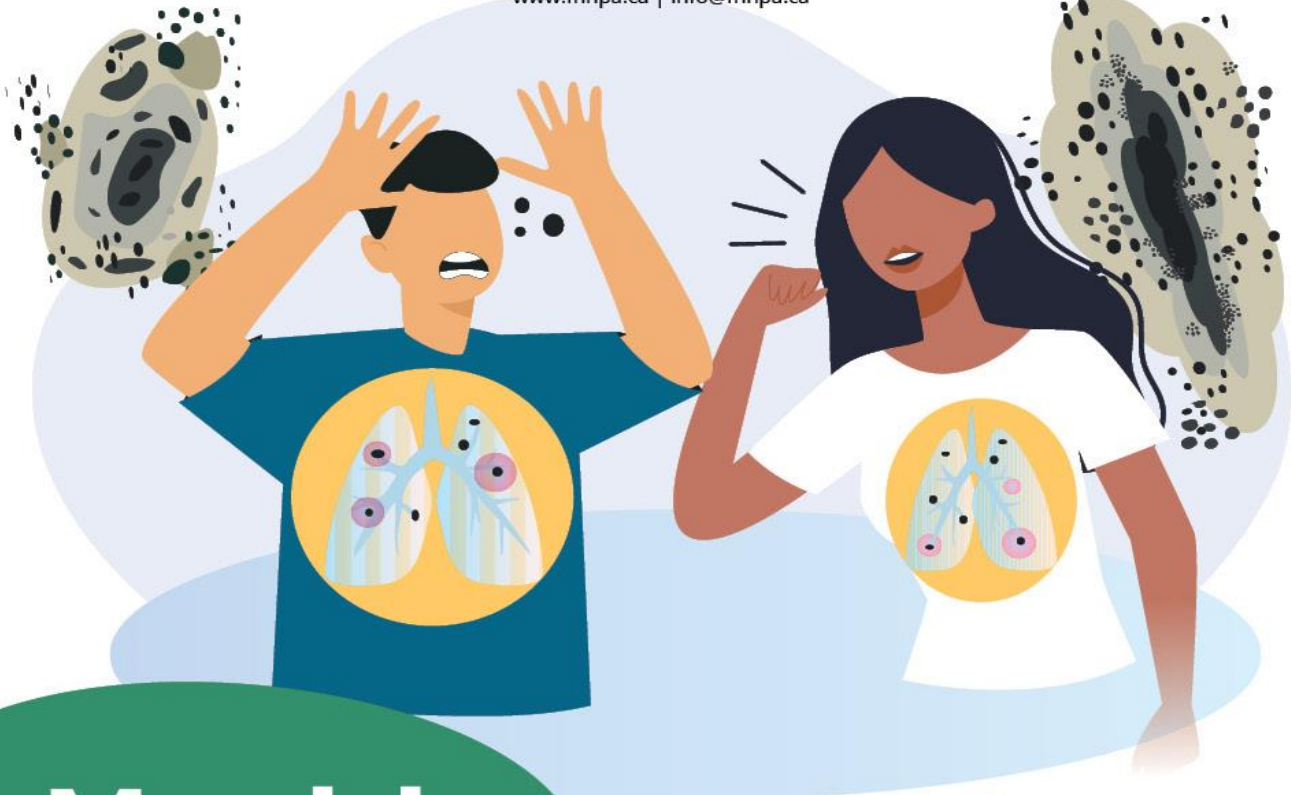


**Home  
Flooding**



**Damp  
Basement**





# Mould

## How Mould Impacts Our Health



**Eye, Nose and  
Throat Irritation**



**Coughing and  
Phlegm Build-up**



**Wheezing and  
Shortness of Breath**



**Worsening Asthma  
Symptoms**



**Allergic  
Reactions**



**Toxic  
Reactions\***

\*(headache, flu-like symptoms, fever, cough, diarrhea and fatigue)





# Mould

## Tips to Clean Up Mould



### Wear Protective Gear

- Gloves
- Eye Protection
- Masks



### Use Soap and Water

When cleaning hard surfaces, there is no need to use bleach.



### Discard Absorbent Materials

Throw away porous materials that cannot be washed and dried (ceiling tiles, carpet upholstery).

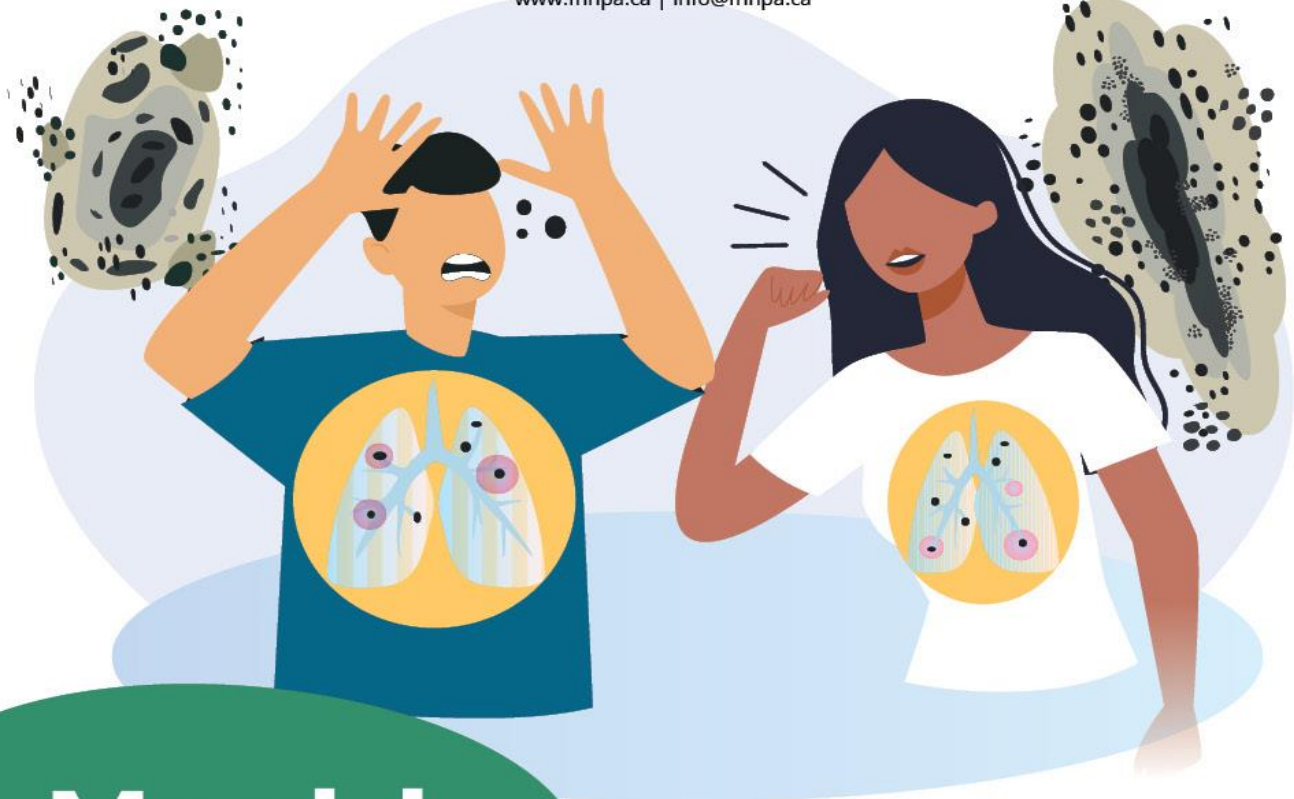


### Vacuum

Clean area with a HEPA vacuum cleaner before and after cleaning.







# Mould

## Mould Prevention Checklist

**Get professional help for serious contamination problems, such as a flood**

- Look for damp spots in your house (basements, closets, window sills, roofs, and near sinks, tubs and pipes).
- Ensure that the seals around tubs and sinks are tight so that water doesn't leak into the walls.
- Keep your home well ventilated by opening windows and using fans.
- Reduce humidity in your home.
- Leave interior doors open for good air and heat flow.
- Regularly clean anything that holds water.
- Use kitchen exhaust fans when cooking.
- Use bathroom exhaust fans when showering.
- Repair plumbing leaks promptly.
- Leave the washing machine door open when not in use to prevent mould and bacteria from growing.
- Keep furniture away from outside walls for better airflow.
- Keep closets and storage spaces clear of clutter.
- Promptly repair any leaks near windows, window frames and sills.
- Insulate cold surfaces to prevent condensation on piping, windows, exterior walls, roofs and floors.
- Use kitchen range hood every time you cook to remove moisture.
- Clean the lint tray every time you use the dryer.
- Clean up floor spills immediately.





### 3.3 Energy Efficiency

Taking steps to make your home more energy-efficient helps create a healthier home for you and helps the environment. Making small changes can help you contribute to saving energy.

Tips to be more energy efficient:

- Fix leaky taps
- Wash clothes in cold water instead of hot
- Air-dry clothing when possible
- Instal sensors and dimmers to reduce indoor lighting costs and use less energy
- Walk or bike rather than drive when possible
- Change light bulbs to LED
- Use natural lighting when possible

#### Phantom power

Another thing to keep in mind is phantom power. Phantom power refers to the energy that is wasted around your home when devices are plugged in and using power when you are not actively using them.

In order to fight this, you can plug PCs, game consoles, TVs and other electronics into a power bar with a timer to automatically shut off when not being used.

The following resources are infographic posters to help First Nations individuals living on-reserve become more energy efficient.





# Energy Efficiency

## How Can I Make My Home More Energy Efficient?

### General



Change lightbulbs to LED.



Air seal your home.



Clean or replace all filters.



Close blinds, shades and drapes during warmer months to help keep your home's temperature cooler and reduce the work for your AC.



Use natural light when possible.



Use your ceiling fan.



Use lamp timers.





# Energy Efficiency

## How Can I Make My Home More Energy Efficient?

### Bathroom



Fix leaky taps.



Take a shower instead of a bath to  
save on hot water costs.



Install a water-saving shower head to  
use less hot water.





# Energy Efficiency

## How Can I Make My Home More Energy Efficient?

### Kitchen



Use air dry feature of dishwasher.



Do not overfill your fridge to allow for air flow.



Keep fridge away from heat sources.





# Energy Efficiency

## How Can I Make My Home More Energy Efficient?

### Laundry Room



Wash clothes in cold water.



Pre-soak stained clothes to avoid re-washing.



Clean the lint trap on the dryer to increase air flow.



Avoid over-drying.



Air dry clothes.





# Energy Efficiency

## How Can I Make My Home More Energy Efficient?

### Garage



Install sensors and dimmers to use less energy and reduce indoor lighting costs.



Walk or bike to work to save costs.



Buy a more fuel-efficient vehicle.



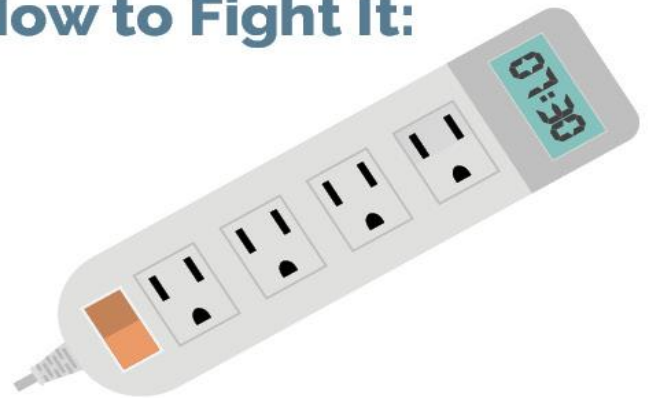


# Energy Efficiency

## What is Phantom Power? How to Fight It:



Energy that is wasted around your home when devices are plugged in and using power but you're not actively using them.



Plug PCs, game consoles, TVs and other electronics into a power bar with a timer or auto-shutoff to help save in phantom power.







### 3.4 Fire Safety

Fire can be extremely dangerous. Not only can it destroy property, but it can take lives. The potential for a fire in the home is not something to be taken lightly.

Tips to ensure fire safety in the home:

- Keep anything that can catch fire away from heat sources
- Install smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors on every level of your home. Also, remember to check, test, and clean them regularly.
- Keep BBQs clean and maintained
- Remove lint from dryer filter after every use
- Avoid using outlet extenders or plug-in power bars
- Keep lighters and matches out of sight and reach of children
- Never leave cooking or any other open flame including candles or oil burners unattended

It is also helpful to create a home fire safety checklist and a fire evacuation plan with your family. The goal of the checklist is to ensure that all household members understand fire safety and encourage everyone to conduct home fire safety checks. The fire evacuation plan is a document that identifies the actions that all occupants of the household should take in the event of a fire.





### 3.5 Chemical Safety

Our homes are full of potentially hazardous chemicals, and we often don't realize the dangers. Many everyday household products contain chemicals that can create dangerous chemical hazards and minor to severe injuries when not handled, used or stored properly. Some examples of hazardous chemicals that can be found around the home include antifreeze, batteries, insecticides, nail polish remover, and toilet cleaners. Knowing how to handle chemicals properly can reduce the risk of injury and help you achieve a healthier home.

Tips for safe chemical use:

- Follow the instructions on the label
- Ensure proper ventilation during and after using the product
- Use protective gear
- Wash your hands thoroughly immediately after using the product

Tips for proper chemical storage:

- Store chemicals in original containers and according to instructions
- Do not store flammable liquids or gasses in the home
- Regularly check containers for leaks or damage
- Keep out of reach of children and pets

Tips for proper chemical disposal

- Follow municipal guidelines on how to dispose of hazardous waste
- Never pour the contents down the drain unless directed

The following resources are infographic posters to support First Nations individuals living on-reserve when handling household chemicals.





# Household Chemical Safety

## Tips for Safe Use:

When using any chemicals, it is important to follow these tips to increase safety.



### Follow the instructions on the label.

The product's label must include instructions on how to use and store the product safely, as well as provide hazard symbols and cautionary statements of potential hazards.



### When in doubt, search up the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on the internet.

The MSDS provides key information and safety recommendations related to the product.



### Use protective gear such as goggles and gloves to protect your eyes and skin.



### Ensure proper ventilation.

When using these chemicals, proper ventilation is very important. Open a window or use the exhaust fan during and after using the product.



### Never mix household chemicals.

Mixing chemicals can produce harmful, toxic gases.



### Wash your hands thoroughly immediately after using the product.



### Do not leave chemical products unattended.





# Household Chemical Safety

Many common household products contain chemicals that when not handled, used or stored safely, can create chemical hazards that are dangerous and cause burns, fires, poisonings and explosions.

## Some Examples of Hazardous Chemicals Found Around the Home Include:



Antifreeze



Batteries



Drain Cleaners



Insecticides



Nail Polish Remover



Toilet Cleaners



Lawn Chemicals











# Household Chemical Safety



## Proper Storage and Disposal

### Storage Tips

-  Store chemicals in original containers and according to instructions.
-  Never store hazardous chemicals near food.
-  Regularly check containers for leaks or damage.

-  Keep all hazardous chemicals out of reach of children and pets.
-  Keep chemicals away from items used to prepare and cook foods.
-  Do not store flammable liquids or gasses in the home.

### Disposal Tips

-  Never burn household chemicals and containers.
-  Follow the municipal guidelines on how to dispose of chemicals and other hazardous waste.

-  Never pour the contents down the drain (unless directed).





### 3.6 Radon

Radon is an invisible, odourless, and tasteless radioactive gas that is produced in the ground. Normally, it dilutes to virtually nothing in outside air, but our modern homes, schools and workplaces are capturing and concentrating radon to unnaturally high and cancer-causing levels in indoor air. Radon is radioactive and unstable and in a very short period, it decays and emits alpha particle radiation, which severely damages our DNA and causes errors that trigger mutations that drive cancer formation. Since radon is inhaled into our lungs, it mainly causes the formation of lung cancer in humans.

There are three factors needed to incur hazardous radon exposure:

- Geologic source and pathway (upwards) for radon into a property
- Building metrics that actively draw up and concentrate radon
- Human behaviour that enables higher exposure

The only way to find out if you live in a home that has high levels of radon is by getting the home tested. The testing will often comprise of the placing of an 'alpha track' device in your home which will register the Bq/m<sup>3</sup> of the indoor air of your home. This is a simple and effective method and should be performed by a qualified person.

