

Over two-thirds of the working population in London believes that its productivity could improve in a working environment with cleaner and fresher air.

A recent Harris Poll on unhealthy buildings revealed that a third experienced tiredness, headaches, sore eyes and upper respiratory tract disorders as a result of the working environment, and 27% of respondents blamed symptoms they considered had been brought on by the office environment for taking a day or more off work in a year. All symptoms are typical of the much-publicised Sick Building

Thumbs-up for cleaner air

Syndrome.

'Loss of working days per person can run into a major financial loss for a company,' said Gray Robertson, president of the American-based ACVA Atlantic Inc, a company devoted exclusively to the identification and control of internal pollution problems in public and commercial buildings. 'It is ironic that the cleanest areas in offices in London are usually those with computers in them. Air gets supplied from under the ground, which allows

for a greater degree of flexibility,' he said.

The vast majority of Londoners, 79%, find that the air where they work can become stuffy or stale. More than half the respondents complained to their management about their working environments and more are said to complain about the temperature, lighting and stuffiness than they do about tobacco smoke or noise.

Over a third thought the air-conditioning was ineffective, while 40% felt that the management

should be more concerned about the office working environment.

According to Mr Robertson around 90% of the Sick Building Syndrome symptoms are recognised and understood. Conditions are usually due to a mixture of factors like inadequate ventilation and poor filtration leading to accumulations of airborne fungi bacteria, dusts, fibres and chemicals released from office equipment, fixtures and fittings and building materials.

The survey showed that people experience the symptoms more in the afternoon after some hours in the office. Although many of the acute symptoms tended to disappear on leaving the office, over 75% still felt tired, irritable or lacking in energy when they got home at night from work.

Referring to a 1988 news release from the American Medical Association, Mr Robertson highlighted the results of a study completed at the Walter Reed Army Institute of approximately 400 000 recruits during their basic training over a period of four years. He explained 'The study examined the incidence of acute respiratory disease at four US Army training centres and it was determined that trainees housed in modern, energy-efficient barracks were about 50% more likely to contract a respiratory infection than were trainees in older, less air-tight buildings. 'It is true that healthy buildings use more energy than sick buildings but the amount is insignificant,' said Mr Robertson.

'Human health really must be brought into the situation.'

Property developers Nisses Millbank and London-based Moss & Partners, commissioned the street survey which included 1135 men and women across the country, 427 of which are Londoners. The company is in the process of transforming Four Millbank into a healthy building. The £75 million refurbishment scheme will include offices from 1900m² to 11 000m², together with a restaurant, health club and 14 apartments.

'Out of those questioned in the Harris Poll 51% wanted sports and health facilities,' said Mr Robertson. 'The building will also use underfloor air-conditioning systems as they prove easier to clean than ductwork as well as providing maximum ventilation.'

'We've worked it out for Millbank that if we shut off the fresh air supply and recycle air we can save 25% on the energy bill which would be a saving of £8750 per year. Looking from a tenant's perspective every 1% absenteeism among the workforce costs £20 000 per year.'

VERSATEMP AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS THAT CAN BE FEATURED, DISGUISED OR HIDDEN.

As the name suggests, Versatemp is a very versatile air conditioning system.

It is available as independently controlled wall or ceiling mounted units which can be ordered in a wide choice of colours. Or you can have them clad or colour keyed to match the interior decor.

But perhaps most interesting of all, the Versatemp system can be fitted under floors or behind suspended ceilings where it takes up less space and requires less ducting and lagging than conventional systems.

And, of course, it's virtually invisible.

With Versatemp, the temperature of every room or zone can be individually controlled.

This makes it ideal for offices, hotels and mixed use environments where staff share the building with computers or specialised manufacturing equipment.

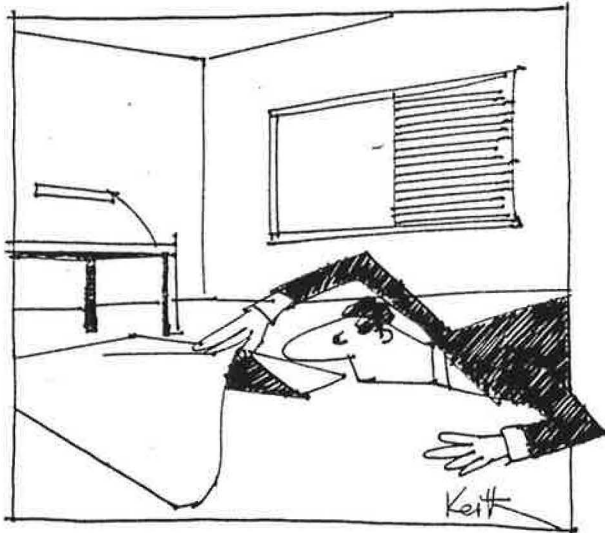
The unique energy reclaim system transfers naturally generated heat from warmer parts of the building to those which are too cold, so Versatemp can actually cut costs. The air is also filtered on the way.

Add to this the other benefits such as low initial costs, easy installation, simple maintenance and genuine energy savings and you'll see why Versatemp is chosen by architects, designers and consulting engineers who have to keep one eye on the purse strings.

So, when you're specifying air conditioning, take a closer look at the Versatemp system by Temperature.

It may not always be easy to see, but at least the benefits are obvious.

Get the full specification today by calling our Sales Desk.



BETWEEN THE HOURS OF TEN AND ELEVEN-FIFTEEN, PINLINGTON AMUSED HIMSELF LOOKING FOR THE AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEM

Cast-iron quality assured



Presenting BS 5750 certification to Beeston's quality manager Philip Mead is the Lord Lieutenant of Derbyshire Colonel Peter Hilton. Getting in on the act are managing director John Wells (left) and Michael Riley.

Beeston Boilers has become the first UK manufacturer of commercial cast-iron boilers to achieve registration to the quality assurance standard BS 5750, part 2. Boiler outputs range from 45 to 1500kW.

Subject of a management buyout in 1987, Beeston committed itself to the quality path from the outset as part of

its new approach to the commercial heating market.

Managing director John Wells tells us that the 'total quality management' concept was introduced and that alongside the procedures required for BS 5750, employees are responsible for the quality of their own work, carrying out 'audits' on the day's output. Reader Reply No. 50

Temperature

Temperature Ltd,
Unit 7, Crown Business Centre,
Horton Road, West Drayton UB7 8HZ,
United Kingdom
Tel: (0895) 431617 Fax: (0895) 431372

Bury goes private

Bury Health Authority has placed a total works maintenance contract with a private contractor — a move which is believed to be a first in the UK. The maintenance and security division of Drake & Scull Engineering is to take over

the engineering maintenance of all hospitals and community health premises in Bury.

The contract is worth about £1 million and was won against competition from the in-house workforce and other companies.