PRESS RELEASE

New Guide on Reducing Indoor Air Pollution Exposure During COVID-19 Related Lockdowns

Avoid burning candles, incense or wood fires and open windows to reduce the health risk from indoor air pollution.

C40 Cities publishes advice to help citizens and local leaders reduce indoor air pollution and protect public health

London, UK. 28 April 2020: As millions of people around the world are spending more time indoors during the COVID-19 pandemic, C40 Cities today published a guide for citizens, building managers and city leaders to reduce and manage exposure to indoor air pollution. Emerging evidence indicates that people with poor lung health may be at greater risk of complications or death from COVID-19. While outdoor air pollution has decreased in some cities during the pandemic, many people are spending more time inside, so protecting indoor air quality is as important as ever. The guide is intended to help improve indoor air quality both now and in the future, once the current crisis has passed. The recommendations are not intended to replace any local, regional, or national health guidance in the evolving circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The C40 Indoor Air Pollution Guide is part of a broader effort by C40 to provide relevant COVID-19 resources to cities and citizens around the world. The guide provides practical steps that citizens can take in their homes and in private and commercial buildings to reduce exposure to indoor air pollution, both during and after the COVID-19 crisis. Key actions that individuals can take at home include:

- Reducing any burning inside the home (such as incense, candles, and wood fires).
- Send fumes/smoke outside by using an exhaust fan that vents to the outdoors, or opening a nearby window/door if no fan is available.
- Minimise the use of home products that can create air pollution such as artificial air fresheners, pesticides, aerosol sprays, adhesives, and harsh cleaning products. These products release volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the air.

For those that manage residential or commercial buildings, the guide outlines specific actions to protect building inhabitants, like increasing ventilation, ensuring HVAC systems have high efficiency air filters and converting gas stoves to electric.

Finally, the guide explores recommendations for city governments, such as bans on open burning near population centres, and implementing measures in the C40 Clean Air Cities Declaration to reduce outdoor air pollution.
“By addressing indoor air pollution, we can help protect our health during the COVID-19 emergency, with the added benefit of reducing the emissions that are driving the climate emergency,” said Shannon Lawrence, C40 Director of Global Initiatives. “We hope this guide will empower individuals to address one aspect of their health that is within their control, as we all work together to fight this global crisis.”

For more information and resources related to COVID-19, please visit the C40 Knowledge Hub.

About C40
Around the world, C40 Cities connects 96 of the world’s greatest cities to take bold climate action, leading the way towards a healthier and more sustainable future. Representing 700+ million citizens and one quarter of the global economy, mayors of the C40 cities are committed to delivering on the most ambitious goals of the Paris Agreement at the local level, as well as to cleaning the air we breathe. The current chair of C40 is Mayor of Los Angeles Eric Garcetti; and three-term Mayor of New York City Michael R. Bloomberg serves as President of the Board. C40’s work is made possible by our three strategic funders: Bloomberg Philanthropies, Children’s Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), and Realdania.

To learn more about the work of C40 and our cities, please visit our website, the C40 Knowledge Hub, or follow us on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn.