

The Role of Facility Assessment Data in Combating Sick Building Syndrome and Prolonging Asset Life

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Did you know that up to 20% of office buildings have Sick Building Syndrome (SBS)? A syndrome that can cause health complaints and lower productivity. (Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency).

In this article, I will explore why facility assessment data is vital. Regular facility assessments provide data that helps building owners and managers identify issues early, reduce costly repairs, and create healthier workspaces. They ensure occupant health and extend your assets' lifespan. It helps reduce SBS and prolongs asset life. I'll discuss how to use it to keep buildings efficient, compliant, and employees well.

1. Identifying and Preventing Air Quality Issues

Why it matters: Poor air quality is one of the leading contributors to Sick Building Syndrome. Pollutants like CO₂, VOCs, and PM can cause headaches, fatigue, and breathing problems. Facility assessments, especially air quality tests, can find issues before they harm your occupants.

- **Tip:** Add air quality monitors to your building's regular assessments. These systems will let you track and fix air quality issues in real time. This will prevent SBS before it starts.
- **Mistake to Avoid:** Don't wait for someone to raise complaints. Waiting until employees report symptoms of SBS means you're already behind. Monitoring air quality in advance ensures you're ahead of the problem.

2. Detecting Mold and Moisture Issues

Why it matters: Moisture problems can cause mold growth. Mold can trigger SBS and long-term health risks like asthma and allergies. Use facility assessment data to track moisture-prone areas, basements, ceilings, and bathrooms. This can help you find hidden mould issues early.

- **Actionable Tip:** Moisture sensors should be part of routine facility assessments. These devices can detect moisture before it causes mould and allow for quick remediation.
- **Mistake to Avoid:** Underestimating the impact of moisture buildup in hidden areas. Many building owners wait until they see mould. It's costly to remove and may need invasive repairs.



3. Maximizing Asset Life with Preventive Maintenance

Why it matters: Asset longevity depends on regular maintenance. A proactive plan is the best way to prevent system failures. You can track HVAC, plumbing, and electrical systems with facility assessment data. This helps extend their lifespan and avoid costly breakdowns.

- **Tip:** Use your assessment data to create a predictive maintenance schedule. Instead of waiting for equipment to fail, schedule maintenance. This saves you money and extends the life of your building systems.
- **Mistake to Avoid:** Don't wait for a failure to trigger maintenance work. Many building managers wait for a system to fail before fixing it. This often leads to costly repairs and unplanned downtime.

4. Improving energy efficiency and reducing operating costs

Why it matters: Inefficient energy use is costly and hurts the environment. Facility assessments can find where energy is being wasted. This may be due to outdated insulation, faulty HVAC systems, or inefficient lighting.

- **Tip:** Use your data to find inefficiencies. Then, save energy by upgrading insulation, switching to LEDs, or optimizing HVAC. Small changes can result in significant energy savings.
- **Mistake to Avoid:** Ignoring energy audit results or fixing problems piecemeal. Building owners often overlook the bigger picture and miss opportunities to save costs.

5. Ensuring Building Resilience and Compliance

Building codes and regulations are in a state of constant evolution. Complying with safety, environmental, and health standards helps you avoid legal trouble. It also makes your building more resilient to natural disasters and extreme weather. Routine assessments help you stay current on regulations. They also maintain your building's integrity.

- **Actionable Tip:** Make compliance a regular part of your facility assessment checklists. For example, include reviews of fire safety and accessibility in each assessment. This will ensure your building meets all environmental regulations.
- **Mistake to Avoid:** Assuming once a building is compliant, it will always be compliant. Regulations change over time. It's essential to be proactive, not reactive, about compliance.



6. Increasing Building Value Through Long-Term Data Insights

Conclusion: Proactive Facility Assessments Are Key to Long-Term Success

Why it matters: Regular facility assessments track your building's performance over time. This data can boost your property's value. It shows you did your duty to maintain the facility, optimize systems, and ensure sustainability.

- **Tip:** Use facility assessment data to help negotiate leases or sell the property. Show that the building is well-maintained and energy efficient. This proves to potential tenants or buyers that it is future-proofed.
- **Mistake to Avoid:** Failing to leverage this data when making property decisions. Investors, tenants, and buyers want sustainable, long-lasting assets. Facility assessment data can show your building's value.

Integrating facility assessments into your building management strategy does more than prevent SBS. It also extends asset life and improves tenant satisfaction. It creates a healthier, more efficient, sustainable environment for your employees and your profits. Regular assessments help you make informed decisions. They help you avoid costly repairs and ensure your building is compliant and future-ready.

Pro Tip: First, collect baseline facility data. Then, set a regular assessment schedule. With the right tools, you can monitor your building's health and fix issues before they become major problems.

Facility assessment data isn't just about checking boxes. It's about making smart decisions. They should lead to healthier buildings, lower costs, and increased asset value. Commit to assess, analyze, and act today, and you'll see the benefits for years to come.