

Air Cleaners

Quite often, individuals find it confusing when researching how to clean and keep the air clean in the indoor environment. There have been and continue to be many air cleaners advertised for the indoor air. Several claim to clean the air with ozone. Some ozone air cleaners claim to be endorsed by the EPA.

The EPA has published an article in which it addresses the effectiveness and safety issues related to ozone generators. Quoting from the article:

“Several brands of ozone generators have EPA establishment number on their packaging. This number helps EPA identify the specific facility that produces the product. THE DISPLAY OF THIS NUMBER DOES NOT IMPLY EPA ENDORSEMENT OR SUGGEST IN ANY WAY THAT EPA HAS FOUND THE PRODUCT TO BE EITHER SAFE OR EFFECTIVE. The article goes on to describe the dangers associated with ozone generators. <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/ozonegen.html>

Ozone is a naturally occurring gas that in concentrated amounts poses a health risk to individuals. Ozone can damage the lungs and even relatively low amounts are associated with chest pain, coughing, shortness of breath and throat irritation. Ozone may also worsen chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma. It also inhibits the immune system in its ability to fight respiratory infections. Of greater concern is that ozone exposure, unlike most allergens can damage the lungs of even healthy individuals.

So, how does one go about assuring clean indoor air? There are three recommendations. The first is to keep water activity and relative humidity levels low. This means that if any water intrusion or damage occurs it should be addressed immediately to keep building materials and carpets from becoming wet. Damaged gypsum board (wall board) needs to be replaced and the insulation behind it. Carpeting and its backing needs to be dried and/or replaced if necessary.

The next important category is the maintenance of the HVAC system. Highly rated MERV filters should be installed. These will remove even

small size fungi and particles. Maintenance during the years will keep the air relatively clean and free of allergens. Lastly, if additional air cleaning is needed, use true HEPA room sized air filters. These will remove small biological, particle and chemical compound contaminants. The HEPA filter should be placed in the bedroom of the affected individual. It is thought that the immune system recovers best with a good night's sleep.

If someone is living with indoor air quality issues and needs to discover the source of the contamination, a professional mold tester should be contacted.

Air Allergen & Mold Testing, LLC