

'Tis the Season... For a Filter Change

Decorations are up and the aroma of holiday cooking is in the air. Your home is ready for friends and family, neighbors and co-workers, and other seasonal guests. Or is it?

In most parts of the country, winter means closing up windows to keep our homes warm and cozy. Unfortunately, this also serves to trap airborne dust, allergens and bacteria in the home, where they can re-circulate in the breathing air. Many of us also spend this time of year with others: at parties, in crowded shopping malls, and at entertainment venues, where it's virtually guaranteed that someone will be under the weather.

Is it any wonder that the holidays coincide with the start of cold and flu season? All that togetherness is great for celebrating the season, but it also puts us in the cross-hairs of viruses and other germs.

Airborne Irritants: Not Invited to the Party

The warm glow of candles, the crackling of a fireplace, the fresh scent of evergreens. These are the hallmarks of the holiday. But they can also introduce airborne irritants into your home. Remember that lung-damaging dust

can be as small as 0.5 microns. And even slightly larger particles – the toxic particles under 2.5 microns in size – are likely to travel to the deepest part of the lungs, where they can cause a variety of respiratory health problems.

Keep poor indoor air quality (IAQ) from ruining your holiday. Look for a replacement filter rated to capture these tiny particles, keeping in mind that residential air filters typically do not carry familiar MERV ratings to help you decide.

Don't Put Friends & Family at Risk

Think about the people who will be visiting your home this holiday season. Any grandparents or elderly relatives? Infants or small children? Anyone with a chronic illness like asthma or COPD? All of these folks may be at elevated risk for new or worsening illness due to poor IAQ.

Airborne infections like the common cold and influenza spread when bacteria or viruses travel on dust particles or small respiratory droplets that become



aerosolized when an infected person sneezes or coughs. Healthy people can inhale the infectious droplets, or the droplets can land on their eyes, nose and mouth. People who inhale the airborne germs do not have to have face-to-face contact or be in the same room as the infected person.

Like at work, the right air filter will help protect your home's occupants and visitors against pollutants generated inside as well as pollutants from outside air that's drawn into your home by your heating system. And just as at work, filters will only support good IAQ and perform as specified when they are maintained correctly – and that includes seasonal change-outs.

Bottom Line for Facility Managers and HVAC Professionals:

Most commercial air filters today come with a recommended 3-4 month change-out schedule. Why not use the advent of Winter as a reminder to install a new, fresh filter in your home's heating and cooling system as well?

Bottom Line for Filter Distributors and Filter Manufacturers:

The change of seasons is a perfect time to remind your customers about the importance of regular filter change-outs. Whether it's spring, summer, fall or winter, a fresh filter can help trap seasonal and perennial airborne allergens.