



Hooper Corp.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS for Homeowners (and Business Owners)

Owni ng a home is a lot like running a business: It requires continuous oversight and upkeep. What’s more, when it comes to maintaining effective and efficient heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, there’s a lot of overlap between your residence and the office.

“You have the same issues in a home as you do in a commercial building,” says Tanner Douglas, HVAC services manager for Hooper Service, a DeForest-based mechanical contractor that serves both the residential and commercial sectors. “The only real difference is the scale. The systems are similar. You have the same issues with particles floating in the air — bacteria, dust, viruses, and volatile organic compounds caused by off-gassing from equipment, carpet, or furniture — and they’re filtering out whatever indoor air pollution exists.”

That filtering process not only enhances indoor air quality but also extends the life of HVAC equipment. Here are three ways to increase efficiency and make your home — and its occupants — breathe easier.

1. INSTALL AIR EXCHANGERS.

Air exchangers are one of the best ways to improve indoor air quality. These units remove stale indoor air and replace it with

fresh outdoor air on a daily basis, while also adding oxygen to the home. Older structures often allow for too much ventilation because of their construction, while newer ones might be built so tight that they don’t breathe properly. Air exchangers can work wonders regardless of the home’s age.

2. CONSIDER UPGRADING FILTERS.

Air exchangers can be pricey and labor-intensive, so two lower-cost alternatives include high-MERV (minimum efficiency reporting value) filters, which contain thick fabric that traps particles. These filters can be purchased at a home improvement store and installed by the homeowner. But depending on the design and type of equipment in the home, they also can increase pressure and put unnecessary strain on the HVAC system. The second alternative is an electrostatic filter, which acts as a magnet to attract particles while also allowing for greater air flow.

3. OPT FOR ADDITIONAL INDOOR AIR QUALITY PRODUCTS.

Advanced filtration methods reduce dust buildup on crucial parts of the HVAC system by utilizing ionization, UV (ultraviolet) or HEPA (high-efficiency particulate absorbing) products. Ionization systems produce ions that, when air passes over the ionizer, help

reduce airborne particles to create a cleaner environment. Similarly, UV systems rely on light to kill the particles, but they also require bulb replacement every two years or so. HEPA systems, meanwhile, typically are attached to ductwork and run air through a higher-rated filter than traditional indoor air quality systems. They also are more expensive and require more maintenance than ionization or UV products.

“These different indoor air quality products are the same ones we are using on commercial systems — again, just on a different scale,” Douglas says. “For example, with COVID, businesses wanted to make employees feel safe coming into the office again, and they turned to ionization products. We can do the same thing with your home.” ■



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