Use of Air Purifiers, Humidifiers, Dehumidifiers and Odor Enhancers

The Department of University Safety and Assurances discourages the use of personal air purifiers such as ozone generation units, HEPA filtered particulate filters, humidifiers or odor enhancers at UWM.

- **Personal Air Purifiers:**
  
  - **Ozone Generators:** Ozone is a respiratory tract irritant and the hazards of these devices far outweigh any air purifying benefits. Tests by others revealed ozone generators are capable of emitting ozone at levels that are much higher than occupational hygienic standards. The use of ozone generators at UWM is prohibited without prior authorization.

  - **HEPA Filtration Units:** These units are capable of removing very small particulate matter from air. HEPA (High Efficiency Particle Arresting) filtration is commonly used on campus for asbestos abatement projects and for the removal of radionuclides from exhaust effluent. However, personal air filtration units have limited effectiveness, particularly in buildings served by centralized supply/return HVAC systems. Therefore, University Safety and Assurances discourages use of these devices at UWM.

- **Humidifiers:**

  Low relative humidity inside buildings generally occurs during the winter months when humidity is low outside. Although low relative humidity may contribute to respiratory tract and mucous membrane dryness and irritation, the use of humidifiers is discouraged, especially tank style humidifiers which become a pea soup of mold and bacteria. Excess moisture encourages the growth of biological organisms such as dust mites, which are microscopic animals that produce materials causing allergic reactions from household dust, molds, and bacteria.

  Recent studies by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) have shown that ultrasonic and impeller (or "cool mist") humidifiers can disperse materials, such as microorganisms and minerals, from their water tanks into indoor air. The very young, the elderly, and those people with lung diseases or respiratory allergies may be particularly susceptible to certain types of airborne pollutants. An excellent way to humidify an office area is by maintaining common house plants.

- **Dehumidifiers:**

  Dehumidifiers, which lower moisture levels, may be needed in extremely moist environments.

- **Odor Enhancers:**

  The use of incense or candles at UWM is prohibited. Moreover, the use of open flames in University Buildings is strictly prohibited under **UW-System Policy Chapter 18-Conduct on University Lands**.