

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

Air Quality Is Critical to the Success of Your Pet Care Facility!

By Annette Uda

The sudden outbreak of an illness or disease is every pet care facility's worst nightmare. The results can be devastating for you and your business. Any kind of outbreak can affect your bottom line and even jeopardize your hard-earned reputation.



There are many things kennel operators can do to ensure that the animals coming to their facility stay healthy, such as requiring pets to be vaccinated. Although vaccinations are not a sure-fire guarantee that a dog or cat will never get ill, they do offer some level of protection. Regularly disinfecting your floors, food dishes, toys, bedding, and all surfaces is also important. However, these measures alone are not enough to offer maximum protection. In order to control the spread of disease effectively, you must clean the air.

Contaminated air causes respiratory infections to circulate and spread throughout your facility. If multiple pets become ill, it can be damaging to your business, especially if you are asked to cover veterinary bills. Some facilities have even been forced to shut down for a short period of time in order to sanitize their building and keep the disease from spreading. Even the most aggressive method of cleaning the surfaces in your facility won't prevent the spread of upper respiratory infections, as they are airborne.

How Disease Spreads

Disease generally spreads in one of two ways: either through direct contact or through the air. Air-borne transmission is the primary means of dissemination of all respiratory infections. This includes conditions such as canine cough, canine influenza, feline calicivirus, and more.

When an infected animal coughs or sneezes, they release the virus into the air via droplets. These droplets evaporate into millions of tiny particles called droplet nuclei, which float through the air, clinging to dust and dander until inhaled by another animal or person. Once inhaled into the nose or mouth, these substances are so small they often escape the mechanical traps of the upper respiratory

tract and enter the lungs directly. Droplet nuclei are able to survive in the air and circulate throughout your building for hours or even days before entering their next host.

Clean, purified air is the greatest investment you can make in the life of your pet clientele. It will help mitigate airborne transmission, ensuring that you are doing all you can to keep the dogs and cats in your care as healthy when they leave as when they arrived.

Superior air quality means superior service. In a recent survey, pet parents were asked, "How important is it to you that your pet care/pet service companies (daycares, resorts, clinics, shelters, etc.) appropriately treat the air in their

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facility?” Ninety-eight percent of the responses were “Extremely Important,” and the majority said “they would go elsewhere to a facility that cleans the air.” That is perfectly understandable. When you take your kids to daycare, you don’t want them coming home with the flu or a runny nose. Although these things do happen, they cause unnecessary stress and anxiety for you as a parent. The same is true of pet parents. By purifying the air in your facility, you can provide customers with greater peace of mind.

Tips for Superior Air Quality

Allow for outside playtime. Playing outside and breathing in fresh air is extremely healthy for pets.

Install a commercial air purification system. Installing a whole building commercial air purification system is critical to the health of your facility. Institutions such as hospitals, clinics, and other healthcare facilities have been using ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) technology as a means to provide superior air quality for many years. UV technology is nothing new. The same type of ultraviolet rays used in air purification systems is found naturally in the sun. Because the sun emanates powerful UV rays, it is nature’s own disinfecting unit. When properly sized and used indoors, UV technology is extremely effective in destroying harmful microorganisms in the environment. This technology has proven

to be effective in the healthcare industry for decades, and recently it has been proven to be just as powerful in the pet service sector.

As a pet care professional, you can protect the dogs and cats in your facility by putting a few measures in place to provide superior air quality. Not only will this provide peace of mind for you, but it is also a great marketing tool, setting your facility apart from the rest of the pack. ■

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