



*Making Buildings More Efficient*

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## **ECOLOGIZERS – THEY'RE ALL ABOUT WHAT'S COOKING**

Restaurant managers who are not used to having ecologizers can be shocked by the annual cost of maintaining them. Unfortunately, that is the price of controlling grease odours according to the City's standards. Fortunately, there are ways to manage the expenses.

### **Why an ecologizer?**

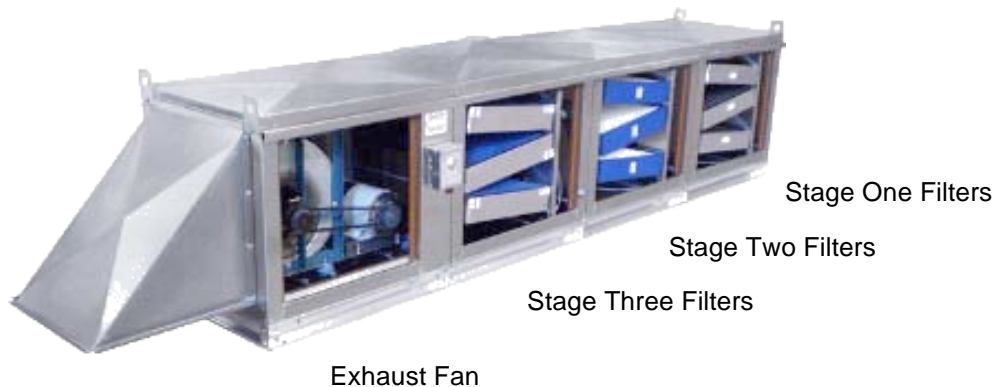
It stops kitchen grease and food smells from escaping to the outside. Your neighbours will be happier and your HVAC system will be cleaner and safer.

### **What is it?**

Envision a metal box with a series of three or four banks of different filters lined up like hanging files. This metal box is installed between your kitchen hood and the exhaust fan (the fan itself could be part of the ecology unit or on the roof.) When your exhaust fan pulls the air through your kitchen hood, it first passes through the ecology filters. This removes the grease and smell before the air is let outside.

### **How does it work?**

Typically, ecologizers will be made up of three stages of filters. First is a pleated filter that stops the biggest particles. Second is a bag filter designed to capture mid-sized pieces. Third is the HEPA filter, renowned for nabbing the smallest offenders. In some cases, there is a fourth stage, the Sentsy Solution – it's a liquid sprayed onto the air stream to dampen the smell.





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Just like the filters on your car or home furnace, the ecologizer filters get dirty with use and need to be changed. Some systems have alarm panels to advise when a filter needs replacing.

If yours doesn't have an alarm, the trick is figuring out how often to change them. Too often and you're wasting money. Not often enough and your restaurant gets smelly or even worse, smoked out.

### **How do I maintain the ecologizer and keep costs under control?**

The short answer is that you need to pay attention to what's cooking and the impact that has on your filters.

- 1) **You don't need to replace every filter every time.** The pleated is the first line of defence and usually requires the most frequent changes. Pleated filters can be as inexpensive as \$5 each, but changing them weekly can add up fast. HEPA filters can cost as much as \$350 and your ecologizer may require eight of them at a time.
- 2) **Align filter changes with business cycles.** If business is down 25%, chances are so is your cooking... and so could be your filter changes. With the converse being true as well. Track the differences in your cooking times, menus, volumes, and monitor the impact that those changes have on the filters.
- 3) **DIY.** Ask your HVAC service provider to supply the filters but to train a staff member on how to change them. It's simple to do and a great way to reduce maintenance costs. Schedule the changes on your phone as a reminder. Place a clipboard/chart and pen nearby to record the date of the change and the status of the filter - 1 being clean/white and 5 being completely clogged/disgusting.
- 4) **Be conservative in the first year.** If you are setting up a service contract, be conservative with the frequency for the first year. Note monthly sales vs. filter status and track complaints to advise you for the next year's schedule.
- 5) **Always use the manufacturer approved filters.** Cheaping out on filters could cost you a lot more in the long run with the liability/risk of a fire hazard.

*Ecologizers can use filters as described above, UV bulbs or both. This article is about the filter type.  
Ecologizers with UV bulbs require professional maintenance for safety reasons.*

More questions? Like what you read? Please call us at 1-800-663-0401 for more information on managing your ecologizer.

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