



MAINTAINING A COMFORTABLE LIVING ENVIRONMENT

Have you ever wondered how to improve air quality in your home and basement environment? There are many reasons that poor air quality in a home may exist, not only in the basement, but in the upper levels as well. There are many products out on the market for homeowners who have sensitivity or allergies to typical indoor air quality problems but finding the right solution can be a real obstacle.

From the Owens Corning Science and Technology Center, here are a few suggestions for optimizing your indoor air quality.

Although the Basement Finishing System™ was designed to tolerate high humidity environments, a finished basement needs to be controlled and conditioned. Controlling this environment is important in maintaining a comfortable living space, as well as in reducing the potential for moisture damage to other materials in the basement. Given this, a means to handle high humidity is recommended. Traditional dehumidifier equipment is one known acceptable and affordable option to address this moisture control.

It is suggested that humidity levels be maintained at no more than 40% Relative Humidity (% RH) in the winter season and no more that 60% RH in the summer season. Controlling the living environment to these humidity levels will provide a comfort level in the basement similar to other upper locations in the home while optimizing the performance of the Owens Corning® Basement Finishing System™. It is strongly suggested that the dehumidifier have the ability to be drained to a sump pump or similar drain to provide continuous drainage capability so as to not rely on frequent manual humidifier bucket draining.

If you are located in an area where this is not a need to address the high humidity levels in your basement, a dehumidifier or similar system may be effective in increasing ventilation and air circulation.

A Titanium Dioxide-treated light bulb, made by Technical Consumer Products, can filter and clean air. When put

into any table or floor lamp that allows air contact with the hot bulb, it converts mold spores, odors and pollen into moisture, helping reduce odors and allergy reactions. This is available at <http://www.fresh2.com>.

A HEPA “High-Efficiency Particulate Air” filter with a charcoal screen will help collect odor-producing spores and improve air quality. While it won’t eliminate odors completely, this device uses an internal charcoal filter to reduce odors to 99.99%. Portable models with an indicator to remind you when to change the filter are best. Many brand-name models, like the Holmes® HEP650, can be purchased in the marketplace at stores such as Wal-Mart or online at www.purityplanet.com.

At this time, it is not recommended that ionic or ozone-generating air filters be used in a basement environment, due to the unknown health aspects of these types of filters. With ozone being a known indoor air pollutant, prolonged use of these devices can negatively affect air quality. Until more study is conducted on the health effects of these devices, we don’t recommend using them to improve the air quality of a basement environment.

While the all materials and design of the Owens Corning® Basement Finishing System™ will not support mold and mildew growth, the system cannot prevent or alleviate mold if the conditions necessary for mold growth otherwise exist in your basement. Your ability to control these situations will be of your best interest. There are several simple ways to do this in your home. Maintain humidity levels with a dehumidifier as mentioned above. Refrain from placing items made of wood or paper tight to the wall so as to allow the moisture to travel through the panel as it was designed to do. Always keep in touch with your Owens Corning® Basement Finishing System™ contractor if there are any future questions.

Independent Resources

- “Science & Technology” Russ Weir (THE UNDERGROUND)
- “Evaluation of the Humidex Air Evacuation System vs. A Traditional Dehumidifier” Oct 2000 T. Aloj

