

# Suggested Air Filter Replacement Practices to Follow During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Reducing the risk of spreading airborne pathogens

The high transmission rate of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has prompted the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to recommend that everyone in the U.S. wear nonsurgical face masks when going out in public. Persons infected with the virus may emit aerosols (particulates or microorganisms) when they talk or breathe. These infectious viral particles can float or drift around in the air, and eventually end up on the media of an air filter.

The coronavirus is stable for several hours to days in aerosols and on surfaces.\* Certain precautions should be taken when servicing and replacing air filters, especially now and during cold and flu season. Healthcare facilities should take extra precautions year-round to reduce airborne infections. The National Air Filtration Association (NAFA) offers air filtration industry resources and guidance for hospital and healthcare facilities at [www.nafahq.org](http://www.nafahq.org).

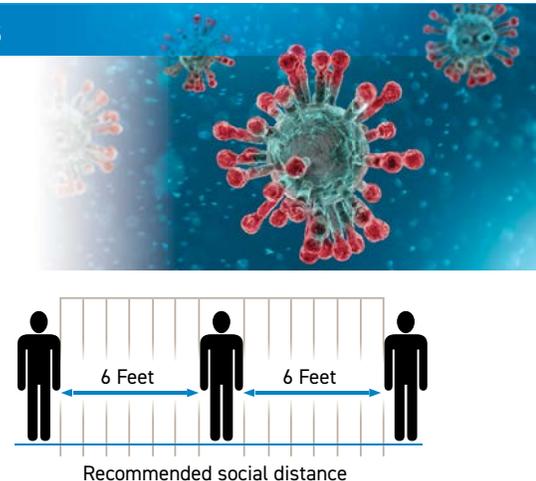
**Please see the reverse side of this bulletin for our recommendations on servicing and replacing HVAC air filters.**

*\*Source: <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/new-coronavirus-stable-hours-surfaces>*



## Know how COVID-19 spreads

The spread of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) mainly occurs through respiratory droplet transfer from person-to-person within a close range of about six feet according to the CDC. The virus can be transmitted on skin, objects, and surfaces that a contagious person may cough on, sneeze on, or touch. Pathogens can also travel on dust and dirt particles as those particles move through the air. Therefore, the potential for airborne transmission through an HVAC system exists.



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# Air filter servicing and replacement

Today's historic global pandemic has raised awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy breathable air inside our homes and other buildings. Standard HVAC filters should be changed at least every three months, or at the minimum recommendation of the air handler manufacturer. In situations where the HVAC system is used continuously, there is a lot of dust present, or there are pets living in the environment, the filter may need to be changed more frequently.

## Steps to replace an air filter

- 1. TURN OFF THE POWER for safety.** Also, turn off any fans in the area at least 20 minutes prior to servicing a filter.
- 2. Wear personal protective equipment (PPE):** This includes a face mask, nitrile gloves, and shoe covers.
- 3. Remove the old filter.** Simply slide it out of the slot that holds it in place.
- 4. Check the condition of the filter.** Does it look clogged with dirt and dust? Many factors can impact how fast a filter will become clogged, shortening the life of the filter.
- 5. Replace the filter.** Immediately place the old filter into a plastic bag being careful not to shake or drop it. Sudden movements can cause microscopic particles to be released into the air. Twist or tie the bag shut and consider taping it to create a seal. NOTE: If the filter has a permanent frame, the media should be removed outside. Be sure to dispose of the old filter in an outdoor trash can.
- 6. Insert the new filter right away.** An arrow on the filter's frame shows the direction that air should flow through the filter, which is always away from the return air duct and toward the air handler mechanism. When inserting the filter back in the housing, make sure that arrow points away from the return and toward the air handler. Write down the date you replaced the filter.



## The importance of changing air filters regularly

Regular maintenance keeps HVAC equipment in top working condition so the parts last longer and the system works more efficiently. Changing an HVAC air filter on a recommended schedule will:

- Improve health and comfort
- Prevent disruptive breakdowns
- Reduce energy consumption
- Limit expensive repairs

## Upgrading a filter for better particle capture

A high-efficiency filter can help improve indoor air quality while capturing smaller particles. To help reduce the spread of viral airborne transmission, Parker suggests a minimum efficiency reporting value (MERV) rating of 13 to 16. Your HVAC contractor will know what types of air filters and accessories will work with your system and how they will affect its performance.

**IMPORTANT:** Parker's products can reduce airborne particulate in a controlled environment. They would not eliminate risk of exposure to airborne viruses but can be part of a comprehensive plan to help reduce that risk.

