

## *Air Duct Cleaning*

Air duct cleaning does not refer to the cleaning of the registers grilles and diffusers, furnace heat exchangers and A/C cooling coils, condensate drain pans (drip pans), humidifier, fan motor and fan housing, and the air handling unit housing. Rather duct cleaning refers to the cleaning of the actual porous or non-porous duct itself.

If not properly installed, maintained and operated, portions of the heating, air conditioning or ventilating system can become contaminated with particles of dust, pollen or other debris. If moisture is present, the potential for microbiological growth is increased and spores from such growth may be released into the building's living space. These contaminants can cause allergic reactions or other symptoms in certain people who are exposed to them.

**Chemical biocides designed to kill microbiological contaminants should not be applied to the inside of porous ductwork because the EPA has not yet determined the safety of such an approach. No product is EPA certified for this use, in part, because the EPA has not resolved these issues. Since biocides kill living organisms, they could cause serious health problems if inhaled.** These health concerns are especially serious if pregnant woman or small children are exposed. All biocide products should never be used in a fashion that would allow any possibility of inhalation.

Chemical treatments (sealants or other encapsulants) are available that can encapsulate or cover the inside surfaces of the air ducts and equipment housings to prevent the release of dirt particles or fibers from ducts, however, **these products should only be applied after the system has been properly cleaned of all visible dust or debris and any wet or moldy sections removed and replaced.** QwikTreat® Porous Duct Sealant with Biocide is a product that will seal porous surfaces such as duct board, but it should not be used on wet or moldy surfaces. Follow all label directions.

The information about the potential benefits and possible problems of air duct cleaning is limited, and the EPA is still investigating the issues. In general, conditions in every structure are different; it is impossible to generalize about whether or not air duct cleaning would be beneficial at a specific location. Generally speaking, if no one in the structure is reporting any unexplained allergies, unexplained symptoms or unexplained illnesses and if, after a visual inspection of the systems and ductwork, there is no clear indication that the system or the air ducts are contaminated with large deposits of dust or any mold (no musty odor or visible mold growth), it is probably not necessary to clean the air ducts. However, the evaporator coil, humidifier, and condensate drain pan should always be cleaned and the condensate drain line or condensate pump checked for proper operation. After cleaning the evaporator coil and humidifier water box; QwikTreat® MoldStop™ Hard Surface Disinfectant should be used to kill and remove mold and other growths, QwikTreat® Pan Tablets should be added to prevent the future accumulation of any type of scum. Consider installing a QwikTreat® Dispenser to allow the equipment owner the ability to easily check and add Pan Tablets as needed.

Use QwikTreat® Hard Surface Disinfectant on any hard surfaces where mold is suspected.

It is normal for the return registers to become dusty as dust-laden air is pulled through the grate. This does not indicate that the air ducts are contaminated with heavy deposits of dust or debris; the registers and the duct region surrounding the registers can be easily removed and cleaned. This is always a recommended practice.

**NOTE:** *If building occupants are experiencing unusual or unexplained symptoms or illnesses, they should discuss the situation with their doctor, including the question of whether these symptoms could be the result of indoor air pollution.*

**NOTE:** *Whenever mold is discovered, the moisture source must be identified and repaired, and the wet or moldy area replaced. While QwikTreat® MoldStop™ Hard Surface Disinfectant and QwikTreat® Porous Duct Sealant both contain biocides, these products should only be used after the area is cleaned and dry.*