

Concerns About the Safety and Effectiveness of Disinfectant Foggers, Mistifiers & Electrostatic Sprayers

Many offices, schools and other public spaces are relying on disinfectant foggers, misters and electrostatic sprayers as a means to combat illness, including coronavirus. Unfortunately, evidence shows that these products are not the solutions we need to protect health and reduce illness, and are instead increasing public exposure to harmful chemicals.

Here are six reasons why **disinfectant foggers, misters and sprayers are not the answer to safer spaces.**

1 Many disinfectants made for electrostatic sprayers and misters contain “quats”.

Quats (ammonium quaternary compounds) are **asthma triggers, allergens**, and are **linked to other respiratory and reproductive harms**. It is unclear what additional health concerns are created by misting or spraying these chemicals (which are, in fact, anti-microbial **pesticides**) room-wide.

2 To disinfect effectively, all surfaces must be pre-cleaned of dirt first.

Foggers, misters & sprayers won't actually disinfect if surfaces haven't been cleaned first to remove grime where pathogens like viruses live. Health benefits of disinfecting after a surface has already been cleaned has not been thoroughly examined and is debatable. In fact, studies show simple **soap and water** can be **effective at killing viruses**, including COVID-19.

3 Neither the U.S. CDC nor the WHO support the use of electrostatic sprayers for disinfection.

The CDC's guidelines for healthcare facilities state “Do not perform disinfectant fogging in patient-care areas.” The WHO's guidelines for disinfecting during coronavirus states “In indoor spaces, routine application of disinfectants to environmental surfaces by **spraying or fogging** (also known as fumigation or misting) is **not recommended for COVID-19.**”

4 We don't know how long disinfectant particles emitted stay in the air after spraying.

While there are very clear recommendations for users to avoid inhaling any spray from electrostatic sprayers, there are no published studies documenting how long particles will stay in the air after spraying.

5 No long-term studies have confirmed electrostatic sprayers to effectively reduced illness.

Manufacturers can measure decreases in the amount of bacteria and viruses found on surfaces immediately after spraying – but the proof of efficacy is really whether people then using those sprayed spaces are getting less sick as a result. There are no long-term studies to confirm that the use of electrostatic sprayers to disinfect spaces have effectively reduced illness.

6 EPA has not approved any product claiming effectiveness against COVID-19 for days to months.

Products making long-term claims often include a small-print caveat that states the disinfection benefits only last when surfaces are not touched or disturbed after application. Basically, **these products are useless for your frequently-touched high risk surfaces** – and relatively pointless for surfaces that no one is coming into contact with anyway.

Foggers, misters and electrostatic sprayers are not solutions to protect health and reduce illness — rather they seem to do little more than increase public exposure to harmful chemicals.

Protection is important. Cleaning (and even some occasional careful disinfecting) is a good thing for public health. This should be done with caution, often with gloves and eye protection, always with good ventilation, and with the safest disinfecting chemicals available. The more we learn about COVID-19, it's clear that the significant risk of exposure is from airborne person-to-person transmission, not from touching surfaces. To reduce illness and the spread of COVID-19 prioritize those actions known to be effective: wash hands, social distance (stay home when possible), and wear a mask.

For resources & references visit: www.womensvoices.org/disinfectant-foggers