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Aromasys and the Elephant in the Room

Air Fresheners have come under fire recently by various health organizations and researchers because of known and suspected health risks posed by them. At the very least, they create barriers to people with the disabilities of asthma and environmentally mediated illnesses. "Up to 30% of the people are affected by perfumes and other fragrances although they are not aware of this", according to retired EPA scientist, Lance Wallace. *

However, because of concern over these health related issues, various environmental groups such as the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club, and Alliance for Healthy Homes have sued the EPA. As a result, companies will be required to disclose all ingredients to the EPA. How much of the information will be made available to consumers is unknown at the present time.

A 2004 study showed that 29.7% of those with asthma said air fresheners caused breathing difficulties and 37.2% found scented products irritating. American Association of Poison Control Centers documented 14,000+ calls involving air freshener exposure in 2005 and 2,500+ exposures resulted in injuries of some type. In a 1997 study, emissions of "air fresheners at several concentrations (including concentrations to which many individuals are actually exposed) caused increases in sensory and pulmonary irritation, decreases in airflow velocity, and abnormalities of behavior measured by the functional observational battery score".

This presents a real problem for travelers, and especially for those who come to Las Vegas and other gaming cities to stay and play. Many hotels and resorts use signature scents made by companies such as Aromasys. Aromasys custom designs fragrances for use in HVAC ductwork through an electrostatic diffusion system. Among their clientele are: The Las Vegas Hilton, Borgata, Loews Hotel, Trump Plaza, Palazzo, Encore and Wynn Las Vegas (which uses Asian Rain).

In spite of the advent of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), companies are not currently required to disclose the chemicals used in their products, being able to hide behind the word "proprietary". Angel De Fazio, President, NTEF, states "When we made an attempt to determine what is in Asian Rain, Jack, the COO of Aromasys refused to discuss their product, claiming that because they are a public company, he did not have to answer questions".

According to Wallace, "Ventilation is recommended instead of air fresheners".* The NTEF in researching hotels in Las Vegas has discovered that the Red Rock Hotel and Casino makes a conscious effort to keep indoor air truly clean. Their Director of Engineering confirmed that The Red Rock does not use any air fresheners, air neutralizers or sanitizers in their HVAC. Consequently, instead of receiving a toxic whiff of chemicals when entering their property, the patron gets fresh air, nothing to exacerbate or create a disability barrier for asthma, etc. We applaud their efforts to create an environment without the barrier of chemically laced air.

With all the current publicity regarding chemicals and air fresheners, one has to wonder, why would a company knowing center on a product whose chemical ingredients can carry health related effects? Were tests for safety actually performed? Were their clientele actually informed of potential health risks? One can only speculate.

The NTEF sees the elephant in the room regarding Aromasys, hotels and casinos, doesn't everyone else?

* Wolper, J. Air Fresheners Are Toxic, July 29, 2008
http://www.efluxmedia.com/news_Air_Fresheners_Are_Toxic_21092.html



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