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Indoor Air Quality Takes Center Stage During Building Reopening

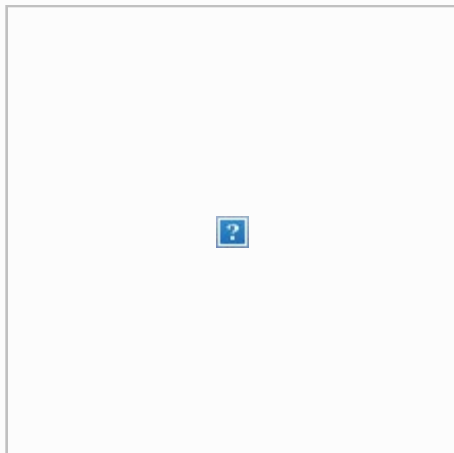


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Creative workplace interior with over hanging lamps. Interior of coworking workplace. GETTY

For building owners and facilities managers, indoor air quality (IAQ) is taking center stage as they plan for safe reopening of workplaces in 2021. IAQ solutions can help reduce the likelihood of airborne disease transmission. New offerings from Honeywell and as a service vendor Aircuity are poised for growth in the IAQ market.

The Importance of IAQ

IAQ is determined by measuring specific parameters such as CO₂, particles, total volatile organic compounds (which include viruses), and dew point. IAQ systems deliver analytics on IAQ scores, IAQ troubleshooting, and improvement opportunities in individual buildings and across portfolios.

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IAQ is expected to be crucial in the next normal for buildings, even after vaccine rollout. Vaccines have been proven effective against symptomatic cases, **but their effectiveness against infection and spread is still unknown**, as is their long-term effectiveness against COVID-19. The possibility of continued spread or the need for repeat vaccinations is real, and

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preventing infections through high IAQ will likely remain a significant concern in workplaces.

Large equipment vendors are diversifying offerings in the IAQ space, many of which can be installed without a full overhaul of existing equipment. For example, [Honeywell electronic air cleaners with ultraviolet \(UV\) systems](#) can be installed inside a commercial HVAC system without the need for full replacement, saving energy while generating ROI with cost savings. The system uses electric charge to filter air while the UV system emits UV light to inactivate viral and bacterial agents, providing filtration and disinfection in one system. [New evidence](#) supports UV systems as effective against COVID-19, increasing the credibility of UV-C lighting systems as healthy building upgrades.

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Air Quality as a Service

New business models also hold promise

for expanding IAQ programs in healthy buildings. [Aircuity](#) has introduced IAQ solutions that incorporate energy efficiency into comprehensive healthy building offerings. Aircuity monitors many IAQ parameters and designs custom solutions, which are funded through savings from an organization's operational and energy savings. This new air quality as a service (AQaaS) model requires no or low upfront capital and can deliver rapid ROI, creating a win-win result for all stakeholders. Building owners see improved IAQ and operations savings, occupants have improved peace of mind and lower rates of illness, and facilities managers have a platform to manage and maintain air quality across the facility lifetime.

Additionally, the recently passed CARES Act supports healthy buildings by making certain retrofits qualified improvement property, which is eligible for bonus depreciation. According to Mark Zettell at accounting firm [Fixed Asset Advisory Services](#), HVAC, mechanical, electrical, and other non-structural upgrades inside the building envelope are tax advantaged, further improving the case for AQaaS and other IAQ investment. With many benefits to all stakeholders and a scalable as a

service business model, IAQ could become a standard in commercial buildings in the next normal.

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