

Smoking could be good for you

VENTILATION engineers have a major opportunity to exploit thanks to efforts from an unlikely source - the Tobacco Lobby.

Faced with possible smoking bans in public places, tobacco manufacturers are keen to demonstrate how the hospitality industry can use ventilation to allow smokers and non-smokers to co-habit happily.

A programme entitled, *The Courtesy of Choice* has been adopted by the hotel trade in an attempt to avoid hotel owners having to dictate policy to their customers.

The scheme was developed by the International Hotel Association in co-operation with the Tobacco Manufacturers Association.

Enhanced displacement ventilation is seen as the secret to keeping smoke away from non-smokers, and the campaign team has completed detailed research in partnership with BSRIA, and this has now been submitted to the Department of the Environment with the aim of receiving support under the Partners in Technology scheme.

EXTRACT

■ Because displacement ventilation works by the plume principle, smoke should theoretically move upwards away from the smoker rather than across the room, potentially into areas occupied by non-smokers, as often happens in pubs and hotels employing extract ventilation.

It is also a low energy solution, as well as having a relatively low installation cost.

A detailed brochure outlining the technical principles in layman's terms is now available to hotel owners and other hospitality trade professionals.

If the principle of the programme is widely adopted - the ventilation industry should enjoy something of a bonanza in sales of systems and expertise to hotels, pubs and clubs.

“Smoking bans could be disastrous for the trade”

Several large hotels have signed up for the scheme, including the Holiday Inn chain, and all have had to ensure that their ventilation systems are suitable to meet the aims of the campaign.

Hard nosed commercial considerations are behind this: research shows that more people smoke in the evening than in the morning, but prescriptive regulations, such as those now being adopted in the US, Canada and France, could lead to rigid and permanently separated smoking and non-smoking zones in public buildings - or total bans.

This could be disastrous for the hospitality industry which could find itself with half empty sections at certain times of the day, when the opposite section is overflowing and custom is being turned away.

The Courtesy of Choice programme allows for 'floating zones' which can be changed from smoking to non-smoking and vice versa as demand dictates.

This system can only work if the ventilation is efficient and flexible. Anyone wishing to find out more about how this can be achieved can receive information free from Spring O'Brien at FREEPOST LON8895, London WC2H 0BR.

HUDDLED

■ Electrostatic precipitators are the most effective way to treat smoking rooms, according to David Kelham of Trion. Traditional ventilation systems would be too energy inefficient, he claimed.

He was commenting on the “all too familiar sight of small groups of people huddled against the cold and wet outside many buildings” because of smoking bans in many buildings.

There is a reluctance to provide smoking rooms because of the high cost of ventilation: “With traditional systems, high volumes of air would be needed to give 20 to 30 air changes per hour which, as it would be fresh air, would need to

be heated and/or cooled and filtered,” said Mr Kelham.

“Air entering electrostatic precipitators is pre-filtered, then passed through an electrostatic cell, first of all receiving a high voltage positive charge, before passing through the alternative positive/negative plates with the charged particles sticking to the negative plates,” he added.

“Finally, the air passes through a charcoal after-filter to remove smells.”

PRESSURE

■ Mr Kelham proposes a system where air cleaners are selected to give an air volume equivalent to 15 air cleans per hour. A small extract system should also be in place to

“Smokers and non-smokers can live together”

provide slight negative pressure as well as oxygen replenishment.

“This way smokers and non-smokers can work together in harmony without expensive energy bills as a penalty.” ■

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Readers can get more information on the use of degree days from

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