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**INDOORS OR OUTDOORS – AIR POLLUTANTS CREATE HEALTH
HAZARDS FOR ALLERGY AND ASTHMA SUFFERERS**

WASHINGTON, DC (July 2001) – The dog days of summer are here! And that can mean many challenges for people suffering from allergies and asthma. Why? The ozone alerts that occur frequently during the peak season – April through October – send people scrambling indoors to find relief from smog, air pollution and other irritants created when the ozone levels are high. Ozone Action Days are called when weather conditions are conducive to ground-level ozone formation.

Although ozone cannot be seen or tasted, it can irritate lungs and make breathing difficult. High ozone levels can irritate breathing passages, causing coughing and in some cases damaging the lungs. People with asthma and allergies are particularly at risk from ozone. It makes it hard for them to breathe, but it makes these people more sensitive to other allergens. An estimated 50 to 60 million Americans – about one in every five – suffer from allergies, including allergic asthma. Allergies are rated as the sixth leading cause of chronic disease in the United States. And, more American than ever before are suffering from asthma – an estimated 17 million.

According to a 1995 study by the Harvard School of Public Health, city dwellers are 15 to 17 times more likely to die prematurely, when they live in cities where smoke stacks and traffic pollute air, as opposed to the people who live in cities where the air is cleanest. On days when the ozone is particularly high, people at risk should stay indoors and limit outdoor activities. But what about the quality of indoor air?

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The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that indoor air pollutants may be two to five times higher than pollutant levels outdoors. With Americans spending up to 90 percent of their time indoors, pollutants such as tobacco smoke, pollen, mold, dust and animal dander can create both asthmatic and allergic reactions.

As a result, room air cleaners have become not only popular but necessary among asthma and allergy sufferers, and health-conscious people as well. AHAM, the Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers, has created a Clean Air Delivery Rate (CADR) Seal to make the purchase of an air cleaner much easier for the consumer. By providing comparative information on the air cleaner package, CADR helps consumers make the best choice for their home and for the size of the room where the product will be used.

There are many different types of indoor pollution – second hand smoke, dust mites, animal dander and mold and mildew are just a few. The impact of these pollutants is magnified in today's energy conscious buildings, which keep air ventilation to a minimum to avoid heat loss in the winter and heat gain in the summer.

With the variety of air cleaners available, it's often a confusing process to find the right one. AHAM developed the CADR to clear up the confusion. The CADR measurement system rates each air cleaner according to the amount of clean air the product will deliver per minute in cubic feet. Ratings are shown on the seal – which appears on the side of the product package – for tobacco smoke, dust and pollen. Appropriate room sizes are also listed. CADR rated room air cleaners can remove tobacco smoke particles as small as one-tenth of a micron, and dust and pollen particles much smaller than one micron. A micron is 39 millionths of an inch – far below the size of the period ending this sentence.

Room size ratings are calculated based on the removal of at least 80 percent of smoke particles in a steady-state room environment, assuming one air change per hour with complete mixing in the room.

Page Three - AHAM Indoor/Outdoor Air Quality

For a copy of the Consumer Guide for Room Air Cleaners or a list of certified room air cleaners, visit the web site at www.cadr.org.

The Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers is a full-service trade association representing manufacturers of major and portable appliances sold in the United States, and suppliers to the industry. All independent testing and verification for the AHAM Room Air Cleaner Certification program are provided by Intertek Testing Services (ITS), an independent laboratory under contract to AHAM.

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