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Green Technology Spotlight

Ozone Laundry

Lodging establishments can realize significant energy savings with the installation of an Ozone Laundry system. So what is it?

Oxygen (O₂) is in the air we breathe. Ozone (O₃) is a strong disinfectant and non-chemical oxidizer that can be used in place of many hazardous chemicals, not just in the laundry. According to The Ozone Company, ozone is the clean, fresh scent noticed after a rainstorm, and kills bacteria 3,000 times faster than chlorine. It's FDA and USDA approved and certified as organic, and converts back to pure oxygen shortly after use.

How Does Ozone Laundry Work?

Ozone laundry systems use ozone generators to create concentrated ozone that is injected into the water of commercial laundry systems.

Since ozone works best in cool water, the elimination of heated water from the laundry cycle leads to significant energy savings in both the wash and rinse cycles. Laundering in osonated water also reduces the amount of water that fabrics hold. Since the fabrics contain less water, drying time is also reduced, which provides additional energy savings.

Energy Savings

Any industrial, front-loading washer is a candidate for an ozone system. The savings depend on the number of loads processed daily, the amount of hot water currently added during the stages of the traditional laundry cycle, efficiency of the hot water heater, boiler and heat exchanger, dryer energy use, and ozone manufacturer specific recommendations for new washer and dryer cycles.

Manufacturers claim an overall hot water reduction of up to 85%. Payback estimates based on energy savings can range from one to three years. Payback estimates that incorporate energy savings, water and sewer savings, chemical savings, labor and linen savings show that both energy and monetary savings can be realized almost immediately.

Specifically, a hotel with 200-300 rooms can easily expect to see a return on investing in ozone laundry technology in six months to a year, according to industry suppliers. Much

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smaller properties may not see as quick of a payback, especially if their current laundry facilities need not be equipped to handle hundreds of pounds of laundry on a regular basis.

**Non Energy-Related Benefits**
- Reduction in rinse cycles resulting in lower water and sewer costs
- Reduction in chemicals used in laundering
- Reduction of residual chemicals in linens
- Less labor time required as a result of reduced laundry cycle time needed
- Gentler laundering process extends life of linens
- Waste water from ozone laundry systems is good for local sewer systems, as it reduces some of the pollutants in the facility’s waste water.

**Safety Concerns with Ozone Laundry Systems**

Any ozone system should be equipped with ozone sensors to protect workers. Most ozone systems will have some amount of off-gassing. Ozone gas has a slight odor which may be noted by workers in under-ventilated areas.

While not as dangerous as the chlorine gases given off by many cleaning chemicals, ozone can be hazardous if workers are exposed to high concentrations over extended periods of time.

**Additional Considerations**

It may be necessary to retain some traditional laundry capability for extremely soiled loads – you can consult the ozone laundry manufacturer for their recommendations on how to handle heavily soiled loads. Improper water temp or chemical use can limit the effectiveness of ozone. All ozone systems should be properly set up to maximize energy savings and ozone effectiveness. Existing Ozone Laundry Systems in Wisconsin include Holy Family Memorial Hospital, Manitowoc; the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh; Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells; and Holiday Inn Express, Sheboygan/Kohler.

**Focus on Energy offers cash-back rewards on ozone laundry system installations based on first-year annual energy savings. All projects must be pre-approved by Focus on Energy prior to equipment purchase. For more information, contact Focus on Energy at 800/762-7077 or visit focusonenergy.com.**

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