

This Stinks!!!!

By: Bruce Micciche

As I boarded the plane on my way to The Car Care World Expo this year, my wife and I were discussing the poor quality of air that is available to the modern traveler aboard planes.

I started thinking about an article I read a few months ago about sanitizing air ducts and began to wonder why the airline industry hasn't embraced this technology. Maybe they don't even know about it, after all, these are the same people that make you wait, miss your connecting flight and losing your luggage then tell you to have a nice day and thank you for flying with them.

So what does this have to do with odor removal?read on.

In today's world, there are a lot of odors that are created, some made by nature but most made by man and some quite offensive. They are smoke from tobacco products, milk, food, pets, mold and mildew, vomit and urine to name a few.

There are several methods to mask, eliminate and cover up these odors. These methods will be discussed in this article. Just spraying Fabreeze into the car or truck is not the answer to your problem. Nothing is that easy.

It is important that the professional detailer learn how to remove malodors from vehicles because it is one area that the consumer can not do for themselves and it can and will create a very profitable add-on business to the professional willing to take the time and make the investment in the necessary equipment and techniques in malodor removal.

There are really two methods to deal with malodors; masking and eliminating. Masking an odor is quite simply spraying a deodorant into the affected area in an effort to cover it up. Eliminating an odor requires a little more effort, equipment and tenacity.

To eliminate an odor, you must first identify what is causing the odor and remove it. Sometimes it is as simple as removing the moldy ham and cheese sandwich left under the seat by the kids. Other times it may be a little more difficult, like trying to identify the source when it is not readily apparent what or where it is. One quick method to identify a source is to ask the owner of the vehicle. If he or she is unsure, you may try the use of an ultraviolet light. This will help to identify protein based stains like urine, milk or food to name a few. They light up the white like your Tee shirt under a black light.

Currently, there are no commercial devices available to "sniff out" malodors so you need to rely on your sense of smell.

After you have located the source of the odor, you need to remove it. Probably the best method for removal is a good hot water carpet/upholstery extraction machine. You need to "flush" out odor causing bacteria and this is one of the most effective methods available today.

You may encounter stubborn odors that have permeated the seat cushions so deeply that even a good extraction machine cannot get down that far to lift it out. In this case you may try a rather new technique referred to as a "Deep Penetration Injection". This method calls for the injection of an anti-bacteria agent deep into the seat cushion. This chemical penetrates the cells of the foam and attacks the odor causing bacteria from within. Of course you are left with the residual odor in the vehicle to deal with.

So far we have identified the source of the odor and removed it, cleaned the car well with a hot water extractor and, if necessary, injected a biocide into the seat foam, but we still have this odor in the car and in the air conditioning vents.

So now what???????????

There are several machines designed to do just that. They are all either foggers/atomizers or ozone sanitizers. Foggers mist or atomize a chemical into the interior of the vehicle in an effort to seek out the offensive odor and eliminate it. In some cases they increase detail time because they leave behind a residue that needs to be cleaned up. They are also costly to use because they require the purchase of chemicals to be atomized into the interior cabin. One major advantage they have over other machines is price.