

Photocopiers and Ozone

There has been much publicity in recent years regarding the ill effects of ozone in the workplace. Articles have claimed that photocopiers, computers, fax machines and printers emit ozone which can make staff unwell. Ozone has therefore been linked to the workplace ailment Sick Building Syndrome.

Ozone, a colourless gas which consists of 3 oxygen atoms, is toxic and, in sufficient concentration, can cause headaches, coughing, eye, nose and throat irritation. Some of these symptoms have been linked to Sick Building Syndrome. However Sick Building Syndrome is not a recognised illness and there is debate as to what extent it exists or not.

Most modern office equipment is already fitted with filters which limit the amount of ozone released into the environment. So even when equipment is operating in the minimum specified environmental conditions i.e. the machine is situated in the smallest siting location recommended with natural ventilation only, it meets all the national and international occupational exposure limits for ozone.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) notes that