

FOG MACHINE SAFETY

Always follow the manufacturers instructions:

First and foremost, always follow the manufacturers safety and operational instructions. All fog machines should come with an operators manual. While a fog machine will add to the ambiance of your haunt, if used incorrectly they can create the added dangers of fire, electrocution and other nasty and potentially disastrous accidents. It is very important that you look for and eliminate potential dangers that could lead to fires and injuries.

Is Fake Fog Safe To Breathe?

Most consumer fog machines use fog fluid made of a combination of water and a chemical called glycol, which has been found to be safe in a number of studies and is not considered to be hazardous to humans, and generally used without problems. But, some people do complain of respiratory problems and throat irritation when exposed to theatrical fog.

Rosco International of Stamford, Connecticut, a manufacturer of Glycol based fog machines maintains the fog produced is safe when used properly, meaning not "overfogging" and when using only fluid recommended by the manufacturer.

"We have been advised over the years that this is an extremely safe material to be around," says Eric Tishman, senior product manager.

"When somebody sees a smoke or fog like this, it's a psychological problem," says Jim Kehrer, head of pharmacology and toxicology at the University of Texas. "If you see some sort of fog or smoke rolling at you, and you already have a breathing problem, it's going to get worse."

A study, conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in 1994, found no evidence that the fog causes asthma as long as it is used correctly. But because the fog can be irritating or drying, the institute said, exposure to the fog should be minimized, the fluids should be heated to the lowest temperature necessary and the proper fluids should be used.

If the fog machine is used indoors you should make sure the room has adequate ventilation. Some people with breathing problems may have problems breathing while in the fog. It is a good idea not to breath the fog for extended periods of time. Consult the manufacturers recommendations.

Plugging it in:

Make sure that the circuit breaker for the outlet you plug your fog machine into can handle the wattage that the fog machine will draw. Most household circuit breakers are rated at either ten or fifteen amps (you can tell by looking at the breakers themselves), and household current is generally 110 volts. Amps times volts equal the amount of watts that a breaker can handle without tripping. With caution, learn what breakers protect each section of your home and label them. Don't overload your circuit breakers or fuses. Don't overload extension cords or allow them to run through water or snow on the ground. Make sure that the cord is placed in such a way as not to become a hazard to guests. Do not leave a fog machine or any electrical device unattended.

Fog machines get hot!

Fog machines create fog by passing the fog fluid through a heat-exchanger to heat it to a high degree very quickly and then out of a nozzle at the front of the fogger. This coil and the nozzle can become very hot. Don't touch the nozzle during or even shortly after operation. Make sure you place the fog machine in a place that has no combustible materials near it, i.e. curtains, leaves, paper, etc. Do not operate a fog machine on or near any material that could catch on fire. Be careful picking up fog machine that is turned on or was running recently, it will probably be hot. Do not operate a fog machine where it or it's cord could come into contact with water or other liquid.

I've found cheaper fog fluid, can I substitute it for the manufacturers?

We highly recommend against substituting or trying to make your own fog fluid. If the fog fluid is very different from what your fog machine was specifically designed to use it could actually produce toxic fumes. Also, you will probably void the warranty on the fog machine and second you could damage some of the components of the fog machine, such as the heat exchanger and/or pump.

Check Your Fog Fluid!

You should be sure to check the level of remaining fog fluid in your fog machine periodically, particularly if using a remote-timer control. Your best bet is to fill the fog machines tank up and then check it every half an hour or so, re-filling it as needed. One of the main causes of burned out pump-motors is running the fog machine dry (without fog fluid). While it's primary function is to produce the fog, the fog fluid also acts as a coolant/lubricant for the pump and motor.