

# INSECT-O-CUTOR® ... and Flying Insect “Issues”

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Summer and its annual onslaught of flying insects is here. The pest control operator's (PCOs) attention now focuses on various flying insect control and monitoring measures, including insect light traps, “bug zappers”, electrical fly killers, etc. No matter what the device is called, they all operate from a shared technology — ultraviolet (UV) light.

As a manufacturer of such equipment, Insect-O-Cutor® would like to explain some general UV insect trap truths. Hopefully, these truths can assist PCOs in discussions with their clients.

First, a lit lamp isn't always an attracting lamp. Most UV lamps have an effective life span of 7,000 hours. That is, after approximately nine-and-a-half months, the amount of UV light being emitted from a lamp may have decreased by half. This fact is often overlooked because a UV lamp will continue to emit visible light. Visible light is what you and I see, but is largely “ignored” by flying insects.

Secondly, not all lamps are lit the same. Lamps are lit by a power source, a ballast. Depending on the type of ballast (magnetic or electronic), the number of ballasts per lamp or the number of lamps per ballast, an insect attraction lamp can be controlled to emit more or less light.

Simple measurements with a UV lamp meter can verify the intensity and amount of UV light being emitted. By using such a meter, especially before and after a lamp replacement, PCOs can show their clients a credible UV light emission readout. Such measurement reading can convert the most serious doubters.

Finally, direct UV light is most effective. Dif-fused, filtered or shrouded light does have some insect-attractive properties. However, for best results, direct UV light emission is best.

Please remember that UV insect traps are not a panacea or a cure-all for flying insect problems. Rather, UV insect traps are an important and complementary tool for any complete pest control program.

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With the coming of summer, a pest control operator's attention focuses on various flying insect control and monitoring measures, including insect light traps. Many of these devices operate from a shared technology — ultra-violet light. When discussing insect light traps with their customers, PCOs should understand a few things about this innovative, yet often overlooked technology.

First, a lit lamp isn't always an attracting lamp. Most ultra-violet lamps have an effective life span of 7,000 hours. That is equal to about nine-and-a-half months of use, after which the amount of UV light being emitted from a lamp may have decreased by more than half. This fact is often overlooked because a UV lamp will continue to emit visible light. at the end of its effective life span. Visible light is perceptible to the human eye, yet largely ignored by flying insects. UV light emission decreases because of the natural decay of a lamp's phosphor, minerals and chemicals. For this reason, UV attraction lamps should be replaced at least annually.

Second, not all lamps are lit the same. Lamps are lit by a power source, or ballast. Depending on the type of ballast (i.e., magnetic or electronic), the number of ballasts per lamp or the number of lamps per ballast, an insect attraction lamp can be controlled to emit more or less light. Simple measurements with an ultra-violet lamp meter can verify the amount and intensity of UV light being emitted from a trap. By using such a meter, especially before and after lamp replacement, PCOs can show their clients a credible UV light emission readout. Such measurements can convert the most serious doubters that UV lamps “wear out” and require replacement... although the lamps appear to be “on”.

Finally, direct UV light is most effective. Dif-fused, filtered or shrouded light does have some insect-attractive properties; however, for best results, direct UV light emission is best. Of course, for aesthetic reasons, restaurants and other retail accounts may require the use of light traps that are more discrete and do not provide a “direct” light source. However, this is usually not an issue in industrial settings.

Remember, UV insect traps are not a panacea for all flying insect problems. Rather, they are an important and complementary tool for any comprehensive control program.

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**Note:** Mr. Harris's article[s] were published both in **Pest Control** and **Pest Control Technology** in their July 1998 issues to serve as helpful guidelines for pest control operators and their clients.