

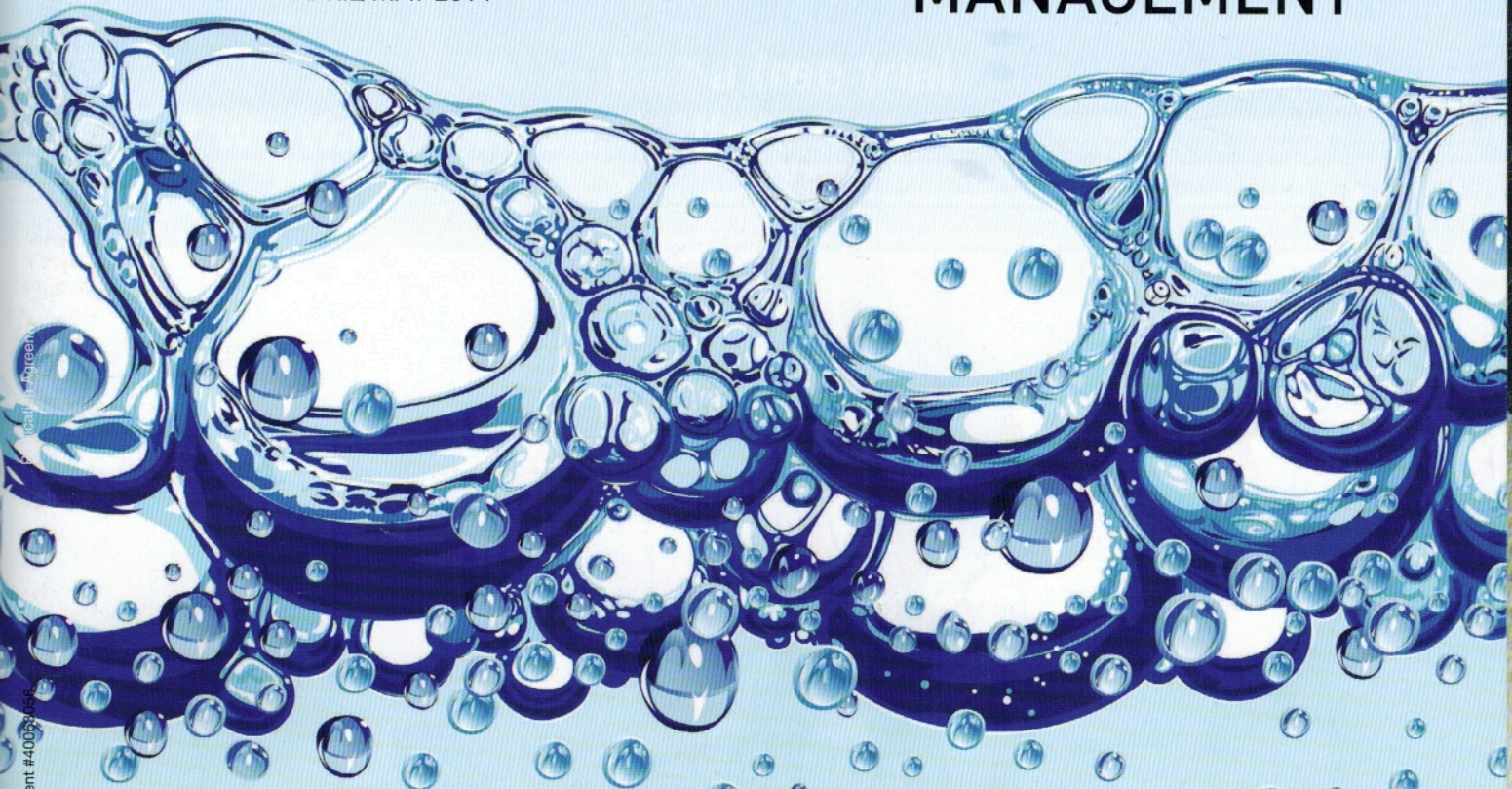
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PROPERTY

VOL. 29 NO. 2 • APRIL/MAY 2014

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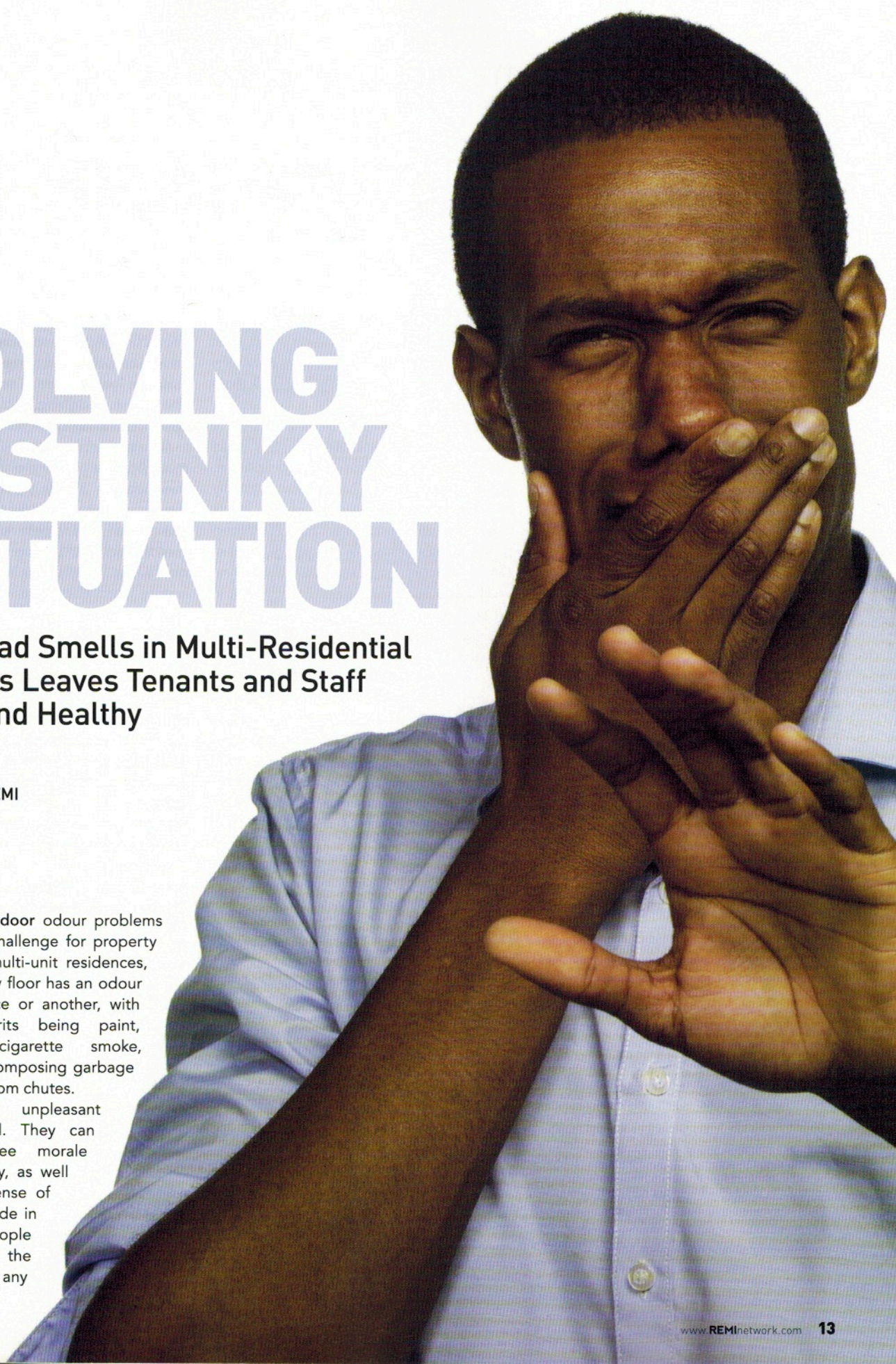
SOLVING A STINKY SITUATION

**Fixing Bad Smells in Multi-Residential
Buildings Leaves Tenants and Staff
Happy and Healthy**

BY NAVID KAZEMI

Dealing with indoor odour problems can be a big challenge for property managers. In multi-unit residences, just about every floor has an odour from one source or another, with common culprits being paint, renovations, cigarette smoke, cooking or decomposing garbage being flushed from chutes.

Odours are unpleasant on every level. They can affect employee morale and productivity, as well as residents' sense of comfort and pride in their homes. People also perceive the cleanliness of any



SHARED COMMON SPACES ARE USUALLY PROBLEM AREAS DUE TO THEIR HIGHER LEVELS OF TRAFFIC AND PROXIMITY TO CENTRALIZED DISPOSAL, COLLECTION AND STORAGE AREAS.

environment through their senses. And while cleaning staff are usually good at making indoor environments visually appealing, dealing with smells is a whole other issue.

Typically, bad smells negatively impact certain parts of a building more than others due to location and type of use. Shared common spaces are usually problem areas due to their higher levels of traffic and proximity to centralized disposal, collection and storage areas. Other trouble spots are the lower-level units in a building. Residents living in these spaces can bear the burden of both hallway odours and the rising smells from the garbage collection and storage areas.

In the past, fragrances and ozone generators were the primary weapons used by property managers to combat odours problems. Now, research and studies have recommended against these methods as they not only fail to fix the underlying problem, but they can even cause more harm than good.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency advises that inhaling ozone can damage lungs. It states that even in low amounts, ozone can cause chest pain, coughing, shortness of breath and throat irritation in humans.

On the other hand, fragrances only mask problem odours without eliminating their source. They work by saturating the air with toxic fragrant particles that overpower the smell and attempt to fool the senses. In most buildings, these obnoxious smells are compounded by scents from floor and window cleaners that maintenance staff use on a daily basis. This can eventually infuse a building with many toxic (and unpleasant) scents.

The Canadian Lung Association also warns that scents absorbed through the skin and lungs can cause problems such as headaches, dizziness and shortness of breath among a portion of the general population. It can specifically affect those suffering with allergies and asthma.

However, there are now alternatives to these outdated odour-fighting strategies. Scientists found that odours could be eliminated naturally by creating electrically charged particles called ions and clustering them with water that is already in the air, thereby creating "cluster ionization."

These ions have an electrical attraction to all particles in the air, including the odour-causing pollutants, which these ions then encapsulate, break down and destroy. Once activated, ion generators can cause a noticeable improvement within six hours, and completely eliminate odours within a day. The solution is safe, green and environmentally friendly.

Property managers can install these ionization systems in areas where bad odours are a persistent issue. These devices create millions upon millions of



PROPERTY MANAGERS CAN ALSO TAKE STEPS TO HELP LIMIT BAD ODOURS BY SOLVING CERTAIN PROBLEMS AT THE SOURCE.

- Put signs in the chute rooms reminding tenants to make sure that their garbage bags don't leak.
- Remind tenants not to keep their garbage for a long period of time, otherwise bad odours can build up.
- Wash garbage bins and their surrounding areas regularly to remove the liquids that will inevitably leak out of the bags.
- Keep doors closed so the air cannot freely carry odours (though smells will continue to leak through cracks and crevasses).

ions per square metre, which are blown by a quiet fan to treat the air.

Clustered ions don't only eliminate odours, they can also destroy bacteria, viruses, volatile organic compounds and moulds. Certain viruses, such as H1N1, can remain suspended in the air or on a surface for 24 hours or longer. By using ions to sanitize the air and surfaces, management can potentially help staff stay healthy and productive. It can also help residents and improve their living conditions by reducing the risk of transmitting bacteria and virus to one another.

Property managers can contact third-party consultants to assess their requirements and install the unique equipment. Many of these ion generators are "plug and play" systems that are relatively easy to run. And even though they must run constantly to be effective, as odours and pollutants are produced on a continuous basis, many are still energy efficient.

By taking steps to solve odour problems rather than masking bad smells, property managers can better their buildings for residents and staff. ■

NAVID KAZEMI IS THE OPERATIONS OFFICER AT ACTIVE CLEAN ENVIRONMENTAL CORPORATION IN TORONTO. THE COMPANY MANUFACTURES PATENTED TECHNOLOGIES THAT PROVIDE COST-EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS FOR PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANIES LOOKING TO COMBATING ODOUR PROBLEMS. THEY CAN BE REACHED AT 1-855-422-3267 OR INFO@ACECO.CA.



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