

The Truth About Dusters

Whether you call it compressed air, canned air or duster, this seemingly simple product is surrounded by misconceptions. Read on to learn more about common myths and to uncover the truth about industrial dusters.

Duster Is Not “Canned Air”

Aerosol duster constitutes of a refrigerant/propellant and is not actually air. Contrastingly, inhaling the vapors can actually lead to negative health effects. The following propellants are most commonly used to fill duster cans.

- **HFC-134a** – This non-flammable formula is most commonly used for industrial applications.
- **HFC-152a** – A less expensive alternative to HFC-134a, this formula is flammable and commonly used for consumer retail applications.
- **CO₂** – With a higher pressure but less consistent spray force, this formula is generally supplied in low capacity cartridges.

Industrial Duster Is Not the Same as Retail Duster

If you're comparison shopping, you may be tempted to purchase duster from consumer retailers. However, this option was developed specifically for cost effectiveness and can therefore lead to problems for industrial applications:

- **Retail duster contains HFC-152a** – Just as propane or butane is typically found in aerosol hairspray, these cheap propellants are used in retail dusters. Because safety is paramount in an industrial environment, the higher-priced HFC-134a alternative is far more common.
- **Purity is questionable** – Industrial buyers tend to rely on trusted brands whose quality is closely monitored, with highly filtered materials and contamination control.
- **Abuse additives** – While many retail alternatives contain a bitterant to prevent abuse by “huffing”, which can have fatal consequences, this same additive may leave potentially harmful residues on sensitive component surfaces.
- **Check fill weight** – Often available in a variety of fill weights, the spray size of a retail duster can be determined only by the label.

Dusters Do Not Hurt the Ozone Layer

The CFCs contained in dusters more than 15 years ago have long since been replaced by environmentally-friendly options and modern dusters do not harm the ozone layer. However, both HFC-134a and HFC-152a have been demonstrated to impact global warming, referred to in terms of Global Warming Potential (GWP). While HFC-134a has a GWP of 1300, HFC-152a has a lower GWP of just 130, making this the greener alternative.

Based on an original publication by Kevin Pawlowski, Senior Product Manager, Techspray.