



ONTARIO CURLING ASSOCIATION

1400 Bayly St., Office Mall 2, #2B, Pickering, Ontario L1W 3R2
Phone: 905-831-1757 Toll Free: 1-877-668-2875 Fax: 905-831-1083 E-mail: information@ontcurl.com

Importance of dehumidification in a curling environment

Dehumidification in a curling environment is very important in many different ways. Typically the curling season includes months of high humidity, particularly during the start-up and closing periods. Humidity causes numerous problems in a curling club, affecting everything from the curling stones and ice quality, to building maintenance and air quality.

Curling stones are the backbone of a curling club and among the club's most valued and expensive treasures. If a building has high humidity, the stones will sweat (condensate), causing early deterioration when the moisture enters the surface of the stones. As the moisture freezes, it causes the stones to pit (granules of granite are forced out of the stone). When this occurs on the running surface (the underside) of the stones, they become mismatched. As a result, they will curl differently and the weight that players are required to throw becomes different for each stone. If the striking band (outer edge) begins to pit, the stones react differently on contact with each other and the granite will chip even further.

Ice conditions deteriorate with increased humidity. The ice becomes heavy, inconsistent and slippery underfoot. Extra hours are also required to maintain the ice. If curlers cannot maintain their balance, there is a risk they will fall and hurt themselves (and others). This increases the club's insurance liability and could create lawsuit possibilities and lost membership revenue.

Moisture in the building causes the plywood dividers and walkways to rot, as well as structural damage to the building's support beams. Ultimately, this can cause the shutdown of the club if the building can no longer pass a structural test. Also, if you cannot remove moisture, mould can occur. Breathing in mould becomes a health risk to the curlers and may cause a club to be shut down, resulting in lost revenue and costly cleanup.

Without dehumidification, extra stress is put on the refrigeration system. When there is a lot of condensation (moisture) in a building, the moisture is attracted to the ice surface. When this occurs, the refrigeration plant has to work harder to maintain the preferred ice temperature. The extra humidity (now ice) that is on the ice surface requires the equipment to work harder and the compressors to run more often. This will be reflected in the hydro bill and repair costs, both of which will increase with the extra machinery running time.

Darrin Sinclair
OCA Ice Team

