

EC Plug Fan retrofit saves 50% fan energy in commercial building

For commercial office buildings, up to 70% of the total energy use is attributed to the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

Fan energy is typically the most significant consumer of energy within a commercial building. Approximately 50% of fan energy can be saved by replacing the existing AC belt driven backward-curved fans throughout a building to EC plug fans.



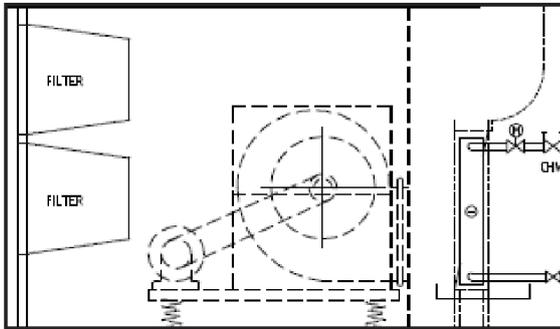
Wakefield House Building, Adelaide

The original fan and air handling unit (AHU) arrangement for level 14 of the government-owned Wakefield Building in Adelaide, which is typical throughout all floors of the building, comprised a coil face bypass arrangement, with air distributed via a belt driven backward curved centrifugal fan arrangement.

In October 2011, the existing fan was replaced by an ebm-papst EC plug fan. Minor works to the damper were also performed.

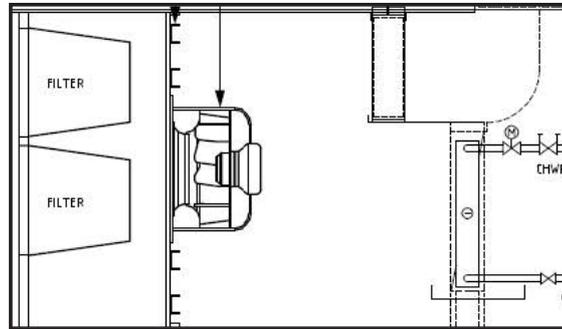


Old System



The main issues with the above arrangement and system relate to performance and the ability to adequately distribute the air to the floor. Due to the system type and the fans proximity to the cooling coil, cooling capacity of the AHU is reduced as only part of the coil face is utilised. Air from the fan is only incident on part of the cooling coil, which then is reflected by insufficient capacity being delivered to the floor.

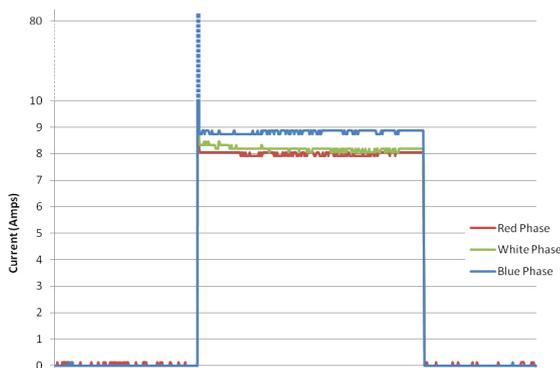
New System



The new ebm-papst EC Plug fan was installed away from the cooling coil, and the damper was rearranged above the cooling coil in the bypass ductwork. The new damper was installed to provide an equivalent pressure drop to the cooling coil, which provides more stable distribution and controllability of supply air. The EC Plug fan pressurises the plenum chamber and rather than delivering an uneven air profile as per a centrifugal fan it provides uniform air pressure and therefore volume across the whole cooling coil, achieving greater capacity from the coil.

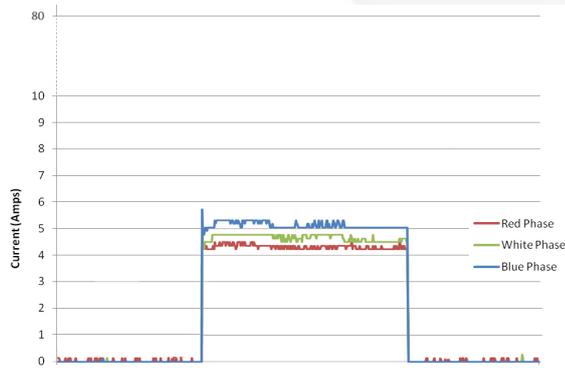
Old Fan current

Starting currents for each day, which exceed 80 Amps, whereas the average current across the phases throughout daily fan operation is 8.55 Amps.



New fan current

Starting currents now approach 6 Amps and the average current across the phases throughout daily operation of the EC plug fan is 4.7 Amps.



Old Performance

Contributing to the insufficient capacity is the reduction in supply air to deliver cooling to the floor. Locating the fan so close to the cooling coil creates turbulence and increases the system static, which in turn reduces the supply air quantity by approximately 10-15% from design. When combined with the reduced performance of the cooling coil, the net reduction in capacity to the floor is approximately 45% from design.

New Performance

As part of the upgrade works, airflow was increased by 10% returning the supply air quantity to the design figure and combined with the resultant increased coil efficiency, cooling delivered to the floor was increased by approximately 15-20%. Starting currents now approach 6 Amps (before 80 Amps), and the average current across the phases throughout daily operation of the EC plug Fan is 4.7 Amps.



Summary

System	Starting current	Operating Current	Annual kWh	CO ₂ Emissions	Annual Operating Cost
Old Belt Driven Fan	>80 A	8.55 A	18,637.3	12.7 tonnes	\$ 3,541.09
New EC Plug Fan	<6 A	4.7 A	9,166.6	6.2 tonnes	\$1,741.66
Savings			9,470.7	6.5 tonnes	\$1,799.43

Supply air flow	+10%
Cooling capacity	+20%
Fan energy used	-50%

Watch the video [here!](#)



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