

The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning industry, or HVAC, is one of the [largest industries in the U.S.](#) The industry is driven by construction demand, as well as maintenance needs. After all, practically all indoor spaces require heating, ventilation, and air conditioning. This is where MERV 13 comes into play.

One of the important aspects of HVAC is air filtration. Ventilation and filtration are perhaps on everyone's mind as questions and concerns about indoor air quality arise due to the pandemic. With it, important filtration terms such as MERV ratings are starting to become commonplace. If you're curious about the air filtration system in your indoor space, but also confused about the importance of MERV 13 filters and the different ratings... we have the perfect summary for you.

The Importance of The Right Filter

First and foremost, it's important to understand why having the [right filter for your indoor space](#) matters. Most of us rely on our HVAC systems without even a second thought. It's crucial to remember just how much really can be in the air we're breathing in at any given time; and thus, how exactly air filters help. The thing is, right filter will eliminate indoor pollutants. This includes bacteria, viruses, smoke, mold spores, dust, pollen and other harmful aerosols and air particles.

Why is it important to eliminate these pollutants? Air pollutants impact your health, meaning that with less harmful particles in the air, you'll be able to breathe easier. This is perhaps especially true for asthma and allergy sufferers and those with health concerns. Filters can also capture and remove potentially poisonous pollutants, eliminating the risk of serious health problems. The bottom line: filtration can provide noticeably cleaner indoor air.

What Is a MERV Rating?

MERV stands for minimum efficiency reporting value. It's a rating system that helps measure the effectiveness of air filters. This judgement is based on how well a filter captures dust and other various particles. It's also an easy and helpful way to choose the best filter for your home or indoor space. For those

interested in a full MERV explanation, we also have a [MERV rating guide](#) that provides an in-depth MERV breakdown.

An easy overview and simple way to think of the scale: filters with higher MERV ratings are better. They are better because they can capture both small and large particles circulating through the air. While MERV ratings are on a scale from 1-20, the standard rating consideration for residential use is between 5-16.

Why Use a MERV 13 Filter?

Why is MERV 13 the ideal air filter for your indoor space? If we view MERV ratings as a whole, there are ranges within the 1-20 scale that help explain why MERV 13 is often the best choice.

At the bottom of the scale are MERV ratings 1-4. While these ratings fulfill the minimum requirement for indoor air filter use, they are unable to capture particles smaller than 10.0 microns, making them significantly less effective.

A step up, MERV ratings 5-8 are considered better for residential use. They are able to capture smaller particles and serves as the starting point for choosing air filters. At the top of this range – MERV 8 filters can take care of basic filtration needs, such as mold and aerosol sprays. However, while these filters are good, there are still many smaller particles that should be filtered out to ensure quality air.

What about MERV 9-12? Keeping in mind that MERV 5-8 filters capture particles up to 3.0 microns, MERV 9-12 filters can capture particles as small as 1.0 micron. While a difference of two microns may not seem like a lot, the distinction is certainly notable in air quality.

MERV 13-16 filters, the highest ratings for residential filters, capture particles as small as 0.3 microns. These filters can capture smaller mold, smoke and allergen pollutants in addition to bacteria and virus particles. Now more than ever, we know how important it is for our air filters to capture airborne viral particles. MERV 13-16 filters also rank higher because they are more effective at capturing and filtering larger particles. This makes them the better option overall.

The Winner Is

Within the ideal MERV 13-16 range, MERV 13 is often the best choice for residential systems. The thickness will not affect airflow, and cleans air better. If you're still not sure about upgrading to a MERV 13 air filter, know they are the official [ASHRAE recommended filter](#).

Can MERV 13 Filters Save You Money?

Short answer—yes. Choosing a MERV 13 air filter is a great long-term investment in your health and quality of life. It's also a great financial investment. While upgrading to a MERV 13 air filter may be a higher cost initially, it can save you money in the long run.

A MERV 13 filter is easy on your heating and cooling system. They also last longer, meaning they don't need to be replaced nearly as often as lower rated filters. Lastly, it's designed to fit where the old smaller filter was, meaning no expensive custom alterations are necessary. The cost-effectiveness of the MERV 13 filter truly makes it the ideal filter choice.