

## Mall Reduces HVAC Labor Hours by 68 Percent — Simply by Switching Air Filters



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From hospitals to manufacturing facilities to office buildings, reducing operating expenses has become not just a goal, but a mandate. Yet while costs must be reduced, quality and safety cannot be. That's a tricky task, but at least as far as HVAC systems are concerned, a completely possible one — thanks to innovative commercial [air filters](#) like those developed by Camfil Farr, the world's leading provider of clean air solutions.

When a major U.S. retail mall — home to more than 400 stores — launched its own program to reduce operating costs, facility managers took a hard look at the existing HVAC system. The first thought was that operating costs could be lowered simply by switching to lower cost filters. Given that the system in place required more than 3,000 air filters, reducing upfront costs seemed like a logical course of action. Yet as the mall soon discovered, those initial costs are only a small part of the equation: The real key to savings was in reducing the air filters' lifetime costs — including labor and disposal expenses.

For calculating lifetime costs — and comparing them for different air filters — the mall turned to Camfil Farr and its proprietary Life Cycle Cost software. This sophisticated analysis program was well-known in the HVAC world, as it is regularly used by facilities across the globe to pinpoint overall filter costs. In the mall's case, the software was used to compare Camfil Farr's Hi-Flo ES pocket filter — which doesn't require a prefilter and would thus dramatically reduce the total number of air filters used — to the existing filter arrangement.

The data from the LCC analysis showed not only that the number of filters would be reduced, but that installation, handling, storage, and disposal costs would also be cut. For example, when disposed of, the plastic frame Hi-Flo ES filters required only 31 percent of the dumpster space required by the mall's existing rigid metal box style filters. That means only 1/3 as many dumpsters would be needed — saving disposal costs while reducing the amount of waste going to landfills.

The mall also discovered that the Camfil Farr filter maintained its MERV 13 efficiency rating throughout the analysis — unlike the existing filter, which degraded over its service life, dropping from a MERV 13 rating to, ultimately, a MERV 10 rating. Such degradations are not uncommon; in fact, they are entirely expected with filters that use synthetic media. The fine fiber media used by the [Camfil Farr air filters](#), on the other hand, prevent a similar drop in efficiency. The Hi-Flo ES filters were also lighter and easier to unload and carry — meaning that a 6-person crew could now do that work, instead of the 12-person crew the existing system required.

In all, the analysis revealed that the mall could reduce its labor requirement by 68 percent — or 1,149 fewer hours over the course of three years. Meanwhile, the Camfil Farr filters would mean 84 percent less waste, and reduce dumpster space by two-thirds.

For the mall, the decision was now simple: By moving to the Hi-Flo ES filter it could reduce operating costs while ensuring that indoor air quality and comfort were at optimal levels. Switching air filters meant big savings — and a big win.

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