Below is a response received on the issue of using fans in the workplace.  Our safety consultant answered:

***Simply stated the answer is that the use of a pedestal floor fan may potentially increase or expand the spread of SARS-CoV-2. SARS-CoV-2 virus is the virus that causes Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).***

***The generally accepted primary mode of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 is from person to person. The***[***CDC***](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/transmission.html)***describes person-to-person spread as follows:***

***The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.***

* + - * ***Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).***
      * ***Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.***

***These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.***

***Fans in the workplace may increase the distance for the SARS-CoV-2 virus to travel from one person to another or the increased air flow may facilitate the respiratory droplets staying in the air for a longer period of time throughout the area (not just in front of the fan).***

***Also, the use of floor fans indicates that the existing HVAC system is not working properly. The HVAC system should be addressed to ensure that it is functioning properly.***

***I wish that were the end of this explanation.  Unfortunately, it is not quite that simple of an issue and this is not to say that fans should universally be removed from the workplace!***

***The use of fans may also be important in keeping the air clean.  The***[***CDC***](https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/general/influenza_flu_homecare_guide.pdf)***instructs people to keep a window open or use a fan to keep the air clean while caring for someone with the flu (influenza, not COVID19) at home. While this referenced document is for a different disease it does illustrate the use of a fan to provide clean air to a space.   Therefore, workplace pedestal fans should be evaluated on a case by case basis to determine if they are or can be either aiding in exhausting of potentially contaminated air or if they are bringing fresh air into the work area.  I would error on the side of NOT using a fan at this juncture while COVID-19 is a concern.***

***In addition, in some instance’s fans serve a very useful purpose to increase air flow and reduce exposure to heat in hot work environments. In other instances, the use of floor fans can have a negative effect on the facility HVAC system causing the integral system to be less effective in maintaining comfortable temperatures and providing proper airflow.  Again, I would error on the side of NOT using a fan at this juncture while COVID-19 is a concern.***

***Please let me know if you have further questions.  Tel:  202.842.4273***

***In solidarity,  
Jim Frederick***

***Frederick Health & Safety Services, LLC***