

Toolbox Talk

16. Dust and Fumes



What?

- Many industrial processes can create harmful dust or fumes, for example when you apply a revolving power tool to material such as a disc cutter, drill or circular saw etc. this releases small particles of material into the surrounding atmosphere. It can also generate heat which in turn creates fumes

Why?

- Essentially any operation where a material is cut, marked or physically altered in any way, especially when using power tools has the potential to give off harmful dust, fumes and vapour
- Depending on the material the health effect can be significant such as asbestos dust, fumes from galvanised steel, brick dust and dust from hard wood
- Exposure to such dust, fume or vapours can result in respiratory irritation, and in some cases exaggerate existing health conditions such as asthma



Do



- ✓ Use local exhaust ventilation (LEV) when undertaking jobs that give off dust, fume and vapour such as aerosols, sanding, grinding, welding
- ✓ Use LEV in preference to personal protective equipment.
- ✓ Ensure where LEV systems are in place they have been inspected and tested
- ✓ Follow the safe system of work
- ✓ Keep the material wet where possible to reduce dust and fumes
- ✓ Always wear a suitable respiratory mask to filter the dust and fumes
- ✓ Use hand tools rather than power tools if possible

Don't



- ✗ Work where there are dust, fumes and vapour such as aerosols, sanding, grinding, welding etc. without the correct level of protection
- ✗ Remove respiratory mask until you are clear of the area
- ✗ Allow others into the work area without proper protection



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