

Working safely with WOOD and WOOD-BASED materials

Avoiding health risks from wood dust

! When wood or wood-based products are cut, tiny particles of wood dust are released. Exposure to wood dust may irritate the nose, respiratory system, eyes and skin.

! Wood dust may act as a carrier for other chemicals which are contained in such things as paints, lacquers, wood preservatives and wood adhesives which may themselves cause health effects if inhaled.

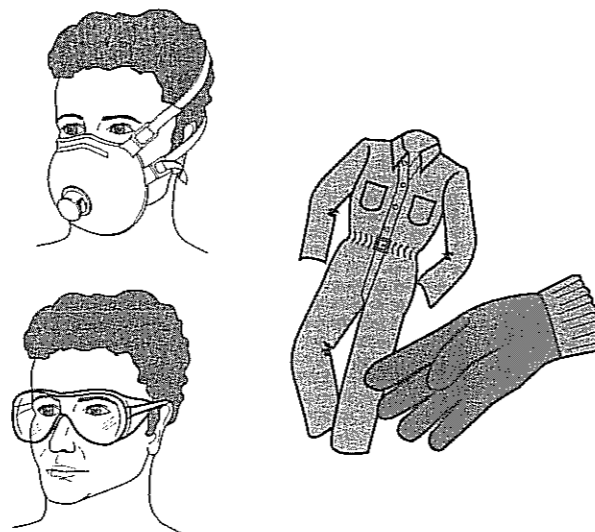
! Some wood species may cause dermatitis and allergic respiratory effects, eg asthma, because of naturally occurring chemicals in them. A rare type of nasal cancer has been linked to the prolonged exposure (20 – 30 years) to wood dust.

! Wood dust is flammable and it can be an explosion hazard.

Take care! Be safe and control wood dust

When using machinery or power tools to cut, drill, sand, rout, plane or otherwise machine wood and wood products:

- use dust control equipment with all dust-producing machines and processes
- ensure that dust control equipment is properly designed and maintained
- if necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (face mask and eye protection)
- work in a well-ventilated environment
- prevent excessive build up of dust — maintain good housekeeping
- keep wood dust away from ignition sources



Please display this leaflet in the workplace or in your site office

What the regulations say about wood dust: *See back page*

**For more information about wood dust, contact your local
Health and Safety Executive office or the WPIF**

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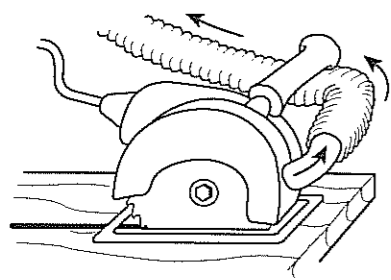
When to take care

What activities ?

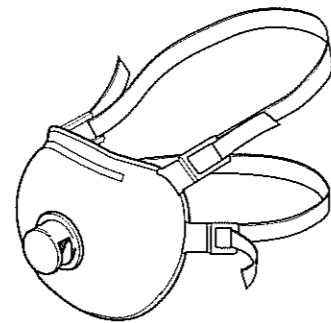
Activities likely to produce high levels of wood dust include:

- sanding by machine and hand
- machining operations, particularly sawing, routing and turning
- hand-assembling machined or sanded components
- bagging dust from dust extraction systems
- using compressed airlines to blow dust off furniture and other articles before spraying
- work-place cleaning, particularly if compressed airlines are used for blowing dust from surfaces etc

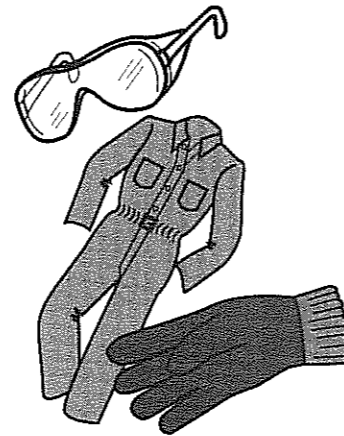
How to take care



Whenever possible, fit dust extraction equipment even when using hand-held machines



Where extraction is inadequate or impracticable, wear a suitable respirator



Wear the correct clothing and use other safety equipment as necessary

What respiratory protective equipment (RPE) ?

RPE

RPE must meet approved standards and it must:

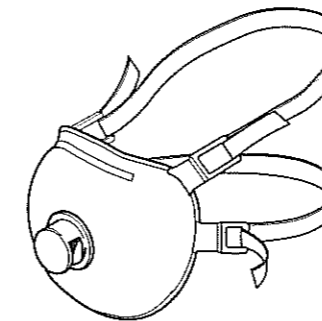
- be suitable for the purpose for which it is to be used
- provide effective protection to the wearer
- fit the wearer
- be replaced or maintained according to manufacturer's recommendations
- be supported by appropriate instruction on its use and maintenance

Types of RPE

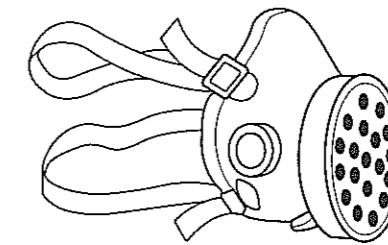
Factors to consider when choosing appropriate RPE include:

- face size and shape
- facial hair
- spectacles
- work-related considerations: detailed information on selection and use is given in HSE Wood-working Information Sheet No 14 *Selection of respiratory protective equipment suitable for use with wood dust*

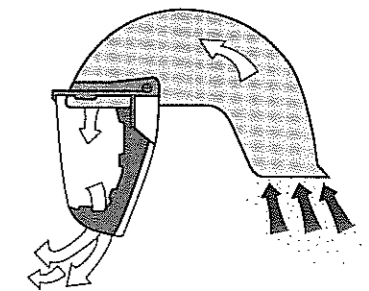
The choice of RPE may be between:



Disposable respirator



Half mask respirator

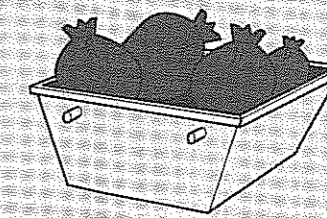
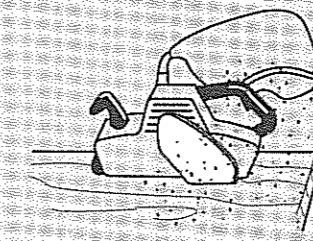


Powered helmet or hood

Respirator type	Activity / specification	
	Machining / cutting / sanding	Changing dust collection bags
Disposable respirator	EN149 type FFP2	EN149 type FFP3
Half mask	Filter to EN143 type P2 mask to EN 140	Filter to EN143 type P3 mask to EN 140
Lightweight powered helmet or hood	EN 146 type THP 1	EN146 type THP 2

Clean up every day

Clean up frequently using vacuum cleaning equipment with high-efficiency filters. Don't use compressed airlines for cleaning down machines, workpieces or clothing and don't use brushes to sweep up – they create dust clouds. Dispose of waste carefully.



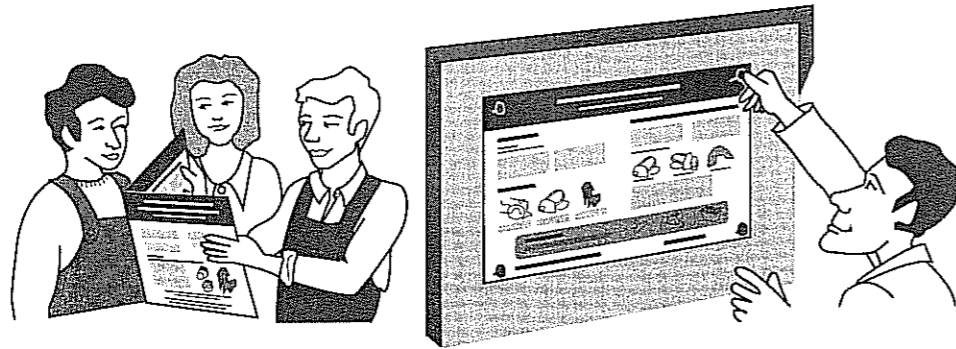
Take care and wear the correct gear

Work safe – be safe

Please display this leaflet prominently in the workplace or in your site office

Material Safety Data Sheets
give more information
on products and their
safe handling

*For more information,
please contact the supplier
or material manufacturer*



Regulations

The elimination or control of risks from wood dust is required by:
Health and Safety at Work etc Act
Factories Act

Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations.

The employer (this includes anyone responsible for wood-cutting operations in craft workshops, schools, theatres etc, as well as in factories) has an obligation under COSHH Regulations to assess any risk and prevent exposure to any hazardous substance. If prevention is not reasonably practicable, suitable control measures must be adopted. Wood dust should be controlled to below its assigned maximum exposure limit of 5 mg/m³ (8-hour time-weighted average) by mechanical extraction; if this is not possible or practicable, or if the mechanical extraction is not completely effective, respiratory protective equipment (RPE) should be used.

Any health risks arising from exposure to wood dust can and should be controlled effectively by compliance with the COSHH Regulations.

- An employer has an obligation to provide the necessary control and protection equipment.
- Employees, and others engaged in woodworking activities, must take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions.

For further information concerning wood dust or safe woodworking practices contact:
Health and Safety Executive Information Centre, Broad Lane, Sheffield S3 7HQ
Tel: 0541 545500 Fax: 0114 289 2333 <http://www.open.gov.hse.uk/hsehome.htm>

These member companies contributed to the initiative:

- Blagden Chemicals Ltd
- Borden chemicals UK Ltd
- CSC Forest Products Ltd
- Dynochem UK Ltd
- Kronospan Ltd
- Masonite Europe Ltd
- Spanboard Products Ltd
- Willamette Europe Ltd

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