

AIRBORNE WORKPLACE HAZARDS: **WOOD DUST**

DO YOU KNOW IF YOUR CONTROL MEASURES ARE EFFECTIVE ENOUGH?

Control measures such as local exhaust ventilation (LEV) are used to protect staff from the respiratory health risks of wood dust and other hazards. But do you know if your expensive investment is effective in controlling the actual exposure of individuals? And how do you measure exposure to see if additional control measures are needed?



Without measuring personal exposure to wood dust or formaldehyde you will not know what levels of these hazards staff are exposed to, relative to the HSE exposure limits.

Use air sampling equipment to monitor the exposure of staff to these airborne hazards to ensure that you:

- Have a permanent record for evidence that you have undertaken monitoring of your staff's exposure to these airborne hazards.
- Make informed choices on the implementation of control measures.
- Demonstrate you are aware of the health risks of hazard exposure for your staff.



Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) Regulations 2002 requires you to reduce the levels of exposure to potentially cancer-causing or respiratory sensitising hazardous substances – such as wood dust and formaldehyde – as low as reasonably practicable below the specified Workplace Exposure Limits.

LEGISLATION

The HSE Workplace Exposure Limits (WELs) in the HSE publication EH40:2005 relating to reducing the level of exposure to wood dust and formaldehyde are:

- Hardwood Dust 3mg/m³ over 8-hour TWA (inhalable)
- Softwood Dust 5mg/m³ over 8-hour TWA (inhalable)
- Hardwood Dust/Softwood Dust Mix 3mg/m³ (inhalable)
- Formaldehyde 2ppm over 8-hour TWA and 2ppm over 15 mins

Wood Dust:
Occupational Asthma
Nasal Cancer
Rhinitis

Formaldehyde:
Respiratory Irritation
Cancer

KEY AIRBORNE HAZARDS FOR THE WOOD INDUSTRY

- Wood dust generated from static and handheld machinery in sawmills, workshops and wood processing areas.
- Formaldehyde in the resins used to make MDF that can be released as vapour.

SO HOW CAN SKC HELP?

At SKC we have over 60 years' experience in the design, manufacture and supply of air sampling equipment. We run regular practical training courses ideally suited to beginners, and our knowledgeable technical support team are happy to help. If you would like further information or guidance on monitoring your staff's exposure to airborne hazards, please contact us.