

# Dust Exposure

## scope

This guide sets out our minimum requirements for when working with common dusts and highlights key safety steps to protect workers health.

Dusts including limestone, gypsum, wood and MDF can create respiratory problems, skin / eye irritation, asthma or lung cancer. Hazardous dusts are often invisible and their effect on your health may take many years to show up. Wood dusts may also include glues, resins, formaldehyde or other harmful chemicals.

Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) and Asbestos dusts have different controls that are covered in separate Water Ways.

Only operate equipment if you are licenced (if required), are competent and have the skills to do the task safely.



## minimum PPE requirements



1

### Buy pre-cut or prepared materials



- Pre-cut and prepared materials can significantly reduce on-site cutting and dusts and can reduce other injury risks such as cuts, aberrations and manual handling issues

## additional PPE

based on site requirements and risk assessment controls



used when exposed to dust not controlled by other means

3

### Use tools that don't create dust



- Hand tools produce very little airborne dust
- Try to work with good ventilation and keep others away

2

### Suppress dust at its source

It is more effective to control dust before it becomes airborne and a breathing hazard

- cover, seal or stabilise dust producing material where possible
- use drop sheets and fit covers or lids at dusty processing points
- use curtains or screens where products are transferred or loaded
- reduce the amount of times products are moved or handled
- operate in favorable weather conditions where possible
- vacuum up rather than sweep up and avoid using blowers

# 4

**On tool dust recovery**  
When using or replacing power tools, firstly consider tools with dust recovery systems



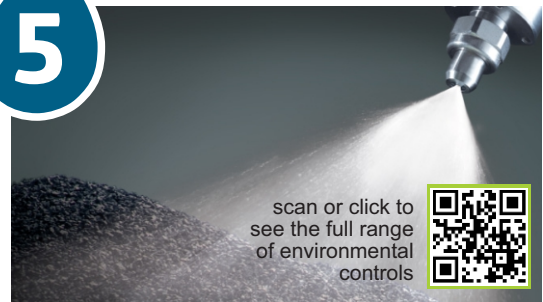
Water suppression can be as simple as a spray bottle or knapsack sprayer

- only apply water if safe to do so eg avoiding electrical hazards etc
- use appropriate environmental controls
- manage run-off if using large amounts of water



# 5

**Consider water suppression**



# 6

**Local exhaust extraction**



- Exhaust extraction systems should be considered for established workshops and long term projects. These must be designed correctly as there is a risk of explosion from some dusts

**Use respiratory protection and other PPE as required**

# 7



- respiratory protection must be used when exposed to dust that is not controlled by other means
- use the correct and fit tested respiratory protection for the product and task
- check the products safety data sheet for its minimum PPE requirements and recommended controls
- avoid creating more dust when removing overalls etc
- wash your face and hands immediately after working with dust and before eating, drinking or smoking
- have your lung function checked through the health check process if you are regularly exposed to dust at work

# 8

Continually monitor the risks and review and adjust the controls as needed for the duration of the work

- Know what to do in an emergency



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