

Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances		ACTS/07/2006	
Meeting date:	3 May 2006	Open Govt. Status:	Fully Open
Exemptions:	None		

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TOXIC SUBSTANCES (ACTS)

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE ACTS FLOUR DUST WORKING GROUP

Background

1. At the ACTS meeting in July 2003 it was agreed that an annual report from each of the ACTS sub-groups would be provided at the ACTS meeting in March each year.
2. This report relates to work during the year commencing April 2005.

Issue

3. In March 2004, ACTS agreed to the setting up of a small working group with industry, trade union and local authority representation to focus on developing a strategy for improving compliance with what was then the Maximum Exposure Limit (10 mg.m⁻³ 8 hour time weighted average; 30 mg.m⁻³ short-term exposure limit, 15 minute reference period). ACTS had requested a review three years after implementation of the MEL in May 2001 and was concerned at the lack of enforcement and compliance with the then MEL. The MEL became a Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) in April 2005 when the new Occupational Exposure Limits framework came into force. The working group met for the first time in November 2004 and is expected to have a life of about two years. Its current membership is listed at Annex 1.
4. The second meeting of the ACTS Flour Dust Working Group took place in September 2005. Members heard a presentation from the Association of Bakery Ingredient Manufacturers (ABIM) on the work the association and its members on reducing, monitoring and measuring the dustiness of flour improvers. The working group action plan was updated in the light of discussion at the meeting and is attached for information at Annex 2.
5. At its meeting in September, the working group discussed a draft proposal for a national initiative on flour dust involving local authority and HSE enforced premises. The following key elements of the initiative were agreed.
 - An inspection-based intervention was appropriate for plant and large craft bakeries.
 - For SMEs in the craft and retail bakery sector, the first year of the initiative should focus on raising awareness of good practice and appropriate control measures, with enforcement commencing in 2007/8.
 - For in-store supermarket bakeries, because of the small number of companies involved, a central approach to agreeing standards of control should be adopted.
6. Members will wish to know that a two-year national initiative on flour dust will commence on 1 April 2006. As part of the Disease Reduction Programme, around 10 training days will be held for EHOs throughout Great Britain and these will include training on flour dust, building on the success

of a local authority initiated training event organised by HSL which was held in North Wales in January. HSE inspectors will carry out planned inspections of plant and medium-sized bakeries throughout 2006/7. A meeting attended by representatives from HSE, LACORS, USDAW and supermarkets was held on 20 March and agreement was reached on working together to agree a 'benchmark' for standards of control across in-store bakeries.

7. The next meeting of the ACTS flour dust working group is planned for June 2006. The working group will evaluate the impact of its work and report back to ACTS at the end of its two-year life.

Action

8. ACTS members are asked to note the information provided in this paper and to suggest future items of work for the working group.

Contact

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE ACTS WORKING GROUP ON FLOUR DUST

Chair: Andie Michael (HSE)

Secretary: Frances Rowswell (HSE)

Members: Brian Coggans (HSE)
Liz Corbett (Glasgow City Council)
Chris Dabner (National Association of Master Bakers)
Ronnie Draper (Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union)
Jo Elms (HSL)
Helen Ferguson (HSE)
Andrew Garrod (HSE)
Alastair Hay (TUC)
Kirk Hunter (Scottish Association of Master Bakers)
Sandy Ritchie (HSE)
Dil Sen (HSE)
Trevor Smith (Federation of Master Bakers)

UPDATED FLOUR DUST WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN (SEPTEMBER 2005)

WHAT	WHY	HOW & WITH WHOM	TIMESCALES	COMMENTS
Details of case studies	To give us a good evidence base which we can pass on to others via the website and at other publicity event. Contact asthma sufferers to speak at events.	Roger Rawbone & David Fishwick (HSL) + TUs and TAs	6 months but some data could be made available much earlier	Project team will consider use of case studies as part of communications strategy.
Bid for FOD resource at publicity events	To publicise occupational asthma and the effects of flour dust to a wide audience	At SADs/SHADs	End 2005/6 or 2006/07	Superseded. Have bid for FOD inspector and HSAO resource for visits, training and awareness raising in 2006/7 as part of the planned flour dust initiative.
Bid for FOD resource for inspections	To publicise occupational asthma and the effects of flour dust to employers & employees working in the bakery industry	Request FOD inspectors support to visit premises to look at conditions	End 2005/06 or 2006/07	See above.
Identify projects that could be taken forward by FOD through HSAOs	To publicise occupational asthma and the effects of flour dust to employers & employees working in the bakery industry	Link with the above project by a mailshot of premises identified as bakeries/food premises provided by LAs	End 2005/06 or 2006/07	See above.