

Advisory Committee on Toxic Substances		ACTS/04/2007	
Meeting date:	25 May 2007	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

Issue

1. Annual report to ACTS members on the activities of the Flour Dust Working Group.

Timing

3. Routine.

Recommendation

4. That ACTS notes the activities of the Flour Dust Working Group since April 2006.

Background

5. 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, which was expected to have a life of about two years, met for the first time in November 2004 and again in September 2005. Its current membership is listed at Annex 1.

6. The flour dust working group has previously reported to ACTS on its activities in June 2005 (ACTS/25/2005), March 2006 (ACTS/07/2006) and November 2006 (ACTS/26/2006).

Argument

7. At its third meeting, in September 2006, the flour dust working group was updated on recent activity on flour dust under HSE's Respiratory Disease Project, including ongoing inspection initiatives in both the HSE and LA enforced bakery sectors and agreement with the major supermarkets on the development of benchmark standards for the control of flour dust in in-store bakeries. Members agreed that flour dust remains a key issue. A report in 2006 by the Institute for Occupational Medicine for HSE entitled '*Trends in inhalation exposure mid 1980s till present*' found that 'downward trends in exposure were observed for all the substances analysed except for flour dust' and research by HSL found flour or enzyme sensitisation in 1 in 7 bakers. The working group identified a number of areas for future activity including evaluating the effectiveness of the work so far, building best practice into industry training courses and the provision of guidance on the selection and use of vacuum cleaners for cleaning up flour.

8. There are currently no plans for further meetings of the working group. However, an on-line community of interest has been set up to act as a discussion forum on flour dust, and both working group members and ACTS members will be invited to join the group.

Action

9. ACTS members are asked to note the information provided in this paper.

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)