

FLO

Advice for managers

COSHH essentials for production and use of flour



The Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) require employers to ensure that exposure is prevented or, where this is not reasonably practicable, adequately

controlled. This guidance gives practical advice on how this can be achieved by applying the principles of good practice for the control of exposure to substances hazardous to health, as required by COSHH.

It is aimed at people whose responsibilities include the management of substances hazardous to health at work (eg occupational health specialists, anyone undertaking COSHH assessments, supervisors and is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives). It will help you carry out COSHH assessments, review existing assessments, deliver training and supervise activities involving substances hazardous to health.

This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory, unless specifically stated, and you are free to take other action. But if you do follow the guidance you will normally be doing enough to comply with the law. Health and safety inspectors seek to secure compliance with the law and may refer to this guidance.

See Essential information near the end of the sheet.

Introduction

HSE have produced these advice sheets to help employers assess and control risks from hazardous substances in the workplace. For some common tasks the sheets take into account the health hazards (and exposure potential) of substances used or produced to identify an approach appropriate to control the risks.

The FL series describes good practice for controlling exposure to flour dust in the production and use of flour. The sheets cover the key points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level. Follow all the points, or use equally effective measures to comply with workplace exposure limits (WELs).

FL1	Bag opening, tipping and dough mixing	FL6	Manual addition of bulk improvers to flour in flour milling
FL2	Weighing and handling flour improvers	FL7	Withdrawn
FL3	Dough moulding and dividing	FL8	Stand-alone dust collector
FL4	Withdrawn	FL9	Withdrawn
FL5	Flour bagging		

What the sheets cover

Reducing exposure to an adequate level always involves a mixture of equipment and ways of working. This means employers should:

- choose the most effective and reliable control measures;
- make sure they are used properly by instructing, training and supervising workers;
- use regular maintenance to make sure control measures keep on working;
- check and review all elements of control measures regularly for their continued effectiveness.

Each sheet gives advice on how to achieve this for a particular task.

Hazards

- Breathing in flour dust can cause asthma.
- Bakery additives/bread improvers contain enzymes (eg fungal alpha amylase) which can also cause asthma.
- Frequent wetting of hands and contact with enzymes may cause dermatitis.
- Flour and some additives may cause skin allergies.

Flour dust is finely ground particles of cereal or pulses (including contaminants) resulting from any grinding process, subsequent handling and use. Any additives (eg flour improvers) are included after they have been added to the final product. Flour dust has been set a WEL comprising a long-term exposure limit of $10\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ (based on an 8-hour time-weighted average) and a short-term exposure limit of $30\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ (averaged over 15 minutes). Exposure to flour dust should be reduced as far below the WEL as is reasonably practicable.

Complying with these advice sheets means that exposures will normally be **less than $2\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$** .

If an individual develops occupational asthma, tiny amounts could trigger an attack. In addition, some people develop sensitivity, which means their symptoms persist long after exposure ends and they may be sensitive to other natural substances and chemicals. If these illnesses occur, advice should be sought on case management from an occupational health professional.

How to use the sheets

- Consider the processes/tasks and hazardous substances in your workplace.
- Look for opportunities to substitute with less hazardous materials.
- Examine the advice sheets for each of the tasks.
- Examine the essential information sheets listed on each advice sheet.
- Compare operations in your workplace with recommendations in the advice sheets for all of the relevant tasks.
- Record your findings (this forms part of your risk assessment).
- Record any actions you need to take covering: issues identified, planned actions, target completion date, person responsible, status of any issues, and a review of effectiveness.
- Keep a record of your actions to prevent exposure of workers to hazardous materials.

You may have to change old working practices or spend money on new controls. Decide how best to make any changes required 'across the board'. If you are in doubt, seek expert help, don't give up! Ask your trade association, trade union or contact a consultant (see Further information).

Essential information

You can find the full COSHH essentials series at www.hse.gov.uk/coshh/essentials/

Health surveillance, monitoring and sampling sheets are available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/gseries.htm

Health surveillance for occupational asthma COSHH Guidance Sheet G402 HSE 2011 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g402.pdf

Health surveillance for occupational dermatitis COSHH Guidance Sheet G403 HSE 2011 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/g403.pdf

Further information

Controlling construction dust with on-tool extraction Construction information sheet CIS69 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/cis69.htm

Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide HSG53 (Fourth edition) HSE Books 2013
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/HSG53.htm

Controlling airborne contaminants at work: A guide to local exhaust ventilation (LEV) HSG258 HSE Books 2011
www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/hsg258.htm

Occupational Safety and Health Consultants Register www.oshcr.org/

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