

Solder fume and you

An employee's guide



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This guidance is aimed at people who solder using rosin, specifically colophony-based solder flux, which can cause asthma and dermatitis.

Be aware:

- Working with rosin-based solder fluxes requires you to take action. You should take appropriate steps to prevent, control or reduce exposure to fumes, as they can cause serious health problems.
- There are different types of solder flux. Find out from your manager what type of solder fume you are using.

Remember:

- Serious health problems can occur when soldering.
- Report symptoms of ill health to your manager. These can include:
 - coughing;
 - wheezing;
 - runny eyes or nose;
 - tight chest.

These can all be symptoms of occupational asthma or serious illness.

- If solder flux fume makes you ill, the effects will become worse if you carry on breathing in the fume.
- Where it is necessary to have a health surveillance process in place to help protect the health of employees, your employer will ask you to co-operate.

To protect your health:

- Keep your face out of the solder fume.
- Use the correct control measure(s), such as:
 - local exhaust ventilation (LEV);
 - solder fume extraction;
 - on-tip extraction;
 - down-draught benches;
 - enclosing hoods;
 - moveable capturing hoods.

Look at *Controlling health risks from rosin (colophony)-based solder fluxes* (see Further reading) for further information on which method you should use.

- Use fume extraction when you are either:
 - soldering using rosin-based fluxes; or
 - using alternative fluxes for more than a few minutes a day.
- You should check that the system works properly every time you use or move it.
- Check for yourself to see how effective the LEV is where you work.

Further reading

www.hse.gov.uk/asthma/solderers.htm

Controlling health risks from rosin (colophony)-based solder fluxes indg249(rev1)
HSE 2015 www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg.htm

Further information

For information about health and safety, or to report inconsistencies or inaccuracies in this guidance, visit www.hse.gov.uk. You can view HSE guidance online and order priced publications from the website. HSE priced publications are also available from bookshops.

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.

This document is available at www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg248.htm.

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