

Daily checklist for extraction

- Does the indicator show the extraction is working properly?
- Is it taking away all the harmful dust? Remember, some dust may be invisible.
- Are you close enough to it so it can do its job properly?
- Are there any signs it is not working properly, like smells or settled dust?
- Are there any unusual noises or vibration coming from it?
- Has it been thoroughly tested, with a 'tested' label that is within date?
- Have you told your supervisor about anything you think may be wrong?

www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking

Any further questions?

How do I know if I need an extraction system?

If you produce wood dust you probably do! You can get information from HSE's website or your trade association.

What kind of extraction system is right for my workplace?

First, you will need to write a specification. It's particularly important that you're very clear about the kind of extraction you need.

Have my staff and I been properly trained?

Training should be included in your system specification. It's essential that anyone responsible for checking and maintaining the system receives training – and that training records are kept.

What happens if I change my working processes?

It's vital that you get your system recommissioned to suit the new circumstances.

How do I arrange a thorough examination and test?

You can either manage this yourself or choose a reliable member of your staff to do it for you. Make sure that the examiner you choose has the experience you need. When you receive your test report, follow the recommendations and carry out any necessary repair work promptly.

Find out more about clearing the air

For further information and to order or download *Clearing the air: A simple guide to buying and using local exhaust ventilation (LEV) (INDG408)* visit:

www.hse.gov.uk/woodworking or call 0845 345 0055.



Health and Safety
Executive

Your extraction system is there to breathe in harmful dust – so you don't have to



Don't chance it
CHANGE IT

Protect yourself – and breathe easy

As someone who is involved in woodworking or sawmilling, you and your staff are constantly exposed to substances in the air that could seriously damage your breathing. Activities such as sawing, routing, turning, sanding and cleaning produce lots of dust, which is carried on the air and enters your lungs with every breath you take.



That's why it is essential that you and your staff are protected by a fully working extraction system (sometimes known as local exhaust ventilation or LEV). This leaflet aims to tell you about checking your extraction system and maintaining it in good working order. The checklist at the end can be torn off and kept as a handy reference.

Your extraction system is vital to the health of your staff

If you're in woodworking or sawmilling, your extraction system is one of the most important pieces of equipment in your workplace that protects your health.

Without effective extraction, you and your staff could be exposed to a range of harmful substances in the air. The dust created by a woodworking business can cause a variety of diseases, including asthma and cancer.

But simply installing extraction is not enough – you need to look after it too.

Like any other piece of workplace machinery that's in regular use, things can go wrong. It may have been incorrectly installed from the outset. Or it may be suffering wear and tear and functioning poorly – or not at all.

But, unlike your other equipment, problems with your extraction system may not be immediately obvious. You and your staff could be breathing in harmful dust without even knowing it. And this isn't just bad for everyone's health – if one or more of your staff had to go off on long-term sick as a result, it could also affect your business.

That's why your extraction system must receive a proper thorough examination and test at least once every 14 months, with simpler checks in between. And it's not just a precaution – it's your legal responsibility.

Keep checking your extraction system

Simple checks you should do every day



Your extraction system should be professionally checked at least once every 14 months. However, there are some basic checks you and your staff can do every day, so you know you're protected.

You should ensure that:

- The extraction is working properly and if there is an airflow indicator it is giving the right reading.
- It is collecting, or containing, dust effectively (Note: some dust is invisible in normal lighting and you'll need a 'dust lamp' to check).
- There is no physical damage or obvious blockages.
- There are no signs of failing performance, eg smells, settled dust, visible escape.
- There are no unusual noises or vibrations coming from it.
- It has been thoroughly tested and carries a 'test' label which is within date.

If your staff are in doubt about one or more of the above – or have any other concerns – they should report these to you immediately.

One woodworker's story



Michael, now aged 40, has been a woodworker for most of his life. For many years, there was no dust extraction. He never received any information from his employers about the harm that wood dust could cause.*

The first signs that he had a problem were a wheeze, cough and tightness in his chest. These only improved if he took a few days off work. Then he suffered a severe attack. He thought he was going to die. After that, he was diagnosed with asthma – which was the result of years of exposure to workplace dust.

Michael's asthma has had a major impact on his work. Each time he has an attack, he has to spend one to two weeks at home recovering.

“ I could feel the dust and adhesive during the day. Driving back I didn't actually think I was going to make it home.”

* Not his real name.

How can I keep my extraction system in good working order?

It is your legal responsibility as the employer to ensure your extraction system is working properly. You will need a user manual that describes the checks and maintenance you should be doing, and a logbook to keep records. If you don't have a user manual or logbook, ask your supplier for one.

What is the thorough examination and test?

This statutory test must take place at least once every 14 months.

The examination checks the performance of your system against the performance recorded in your commissioning report. The examination includes airflow and pressure measurements, checks on control effectiveness and exposure measurement.

If you don't have your commissioning report, or if there have been changes to the way you work or the workroom layout since commissioning, your system must be commissioned again. You need a competent person to help you work out what to do.

Can I do the thorough examination and test myself?

This is not normally something you can do yourself. The examination and test should be carried out by a competent person, with the cooperation of you and your staff. You need to give the examiner the following:

- your user manual;
- your commissioning report;
- your logbook, with details of checks and maintenance activities.

The examiner will attach a 'test' label, and a 'red' label if the hood has failed, and give you a report of the examination or test. This should include an action plan listing anything you need to do.



What happens if my extraction system fails the thorough examination and test?

If the examination shows that your system is not working properly, you should stop working and repair it. If you cannot stop the work while you wait for repairs, you need to ensure your staff wear suitable respiratory protective equipment.

Important note: You may not remove the red 'fail' label until the system has been repaired.

If the thorough examination and test report has a long list of problems and repairs, you need to improve your checking and maintenance procedures.

What additional regular checks should I be doing?

There are four main things to look out for:

Moving parts that may wear quickly, such as fan bearings and filter shakers.

Non-moving parts, including hoods, ductwork and seals, which can wear.

Parts that deteriorate with use, such as filters and flexible ducting.

Parts that need regular attention, such as filters that need to be replaced and waste containers.

What records should I keep?

You should record all your extraction system checks and maintenance in your logbook. This will help you identify and sort out problems before they get serious, and keep track of repairs. It's a legal requirement to keep your thorough examination and test reports for at least five years.

What training should I give my staff?

Your staff should receive basic training on the following:

- What harmful substances you use in your workplace and how exposure may happen.
- How the extraction works and how to get the best out of it.
- How to check the extraction is working and what to do if anything goes wrong.

You should keep everyone's training records and provide refresher training if necessary. Any changes to your work processes may also affect your extraction system – and your staff may need retraining.



Extraction checklist

Your extraction system should carry away any harmful dust:

To protect your health:

- It needs to be the right type for the job.
- It needs installing properly in the first place.
- It needs regular checking and maintenance throughout the year.
- It needs testing thoroughly at least once every 14 months.
- If you move it, make sure it still works.
- It needs an indicator to show it's working properly.
- You need to check that it works properly every time you use it.
- You need to use it properly.

See the checklist, overleaf.

TEAR HERE