

Working with Materials & Products which may Emit Dusts

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Prepared by: Department of Health & Safety	S-020

The following procedure will apply while working with materials or products which may emit fumes or offensive-smelling odours or generate dusts while being cut, sawn, or otherwise worked.

Note: This procedure covers only materials which are known to be asbestos free. See OHS procedure S-001 when working with asbestos materials.

1.0 OBJECTIVE

To minimize health hazards associated with the generation of emissions both to the user and building occupants or others in or on campus properties.

2.0 SCOPE

While this procedure is primarily aimed at maintenance and service personnel and contractors, it applies to all sectors of the campus community having occasion to use products, materials, and processes which may impact on safety and health in all campus facilities.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY

The department Manager shall assume responsibility for implementation of this procedure within the department. The final responsibility for ensuring that the procedure is followed in the workplace rests with the immediate supervisor and the project manager in the case of contractors. All employees/contractors shall follow the procedure while working with such materials or products.

4.0 PROCEDURE

Prior to undertaking any work involving cutting, sawing, or working of any material with potential for release of dusts or when using glues, paints, solvents, chemicals, cleaners, or other offensive-smelling products or processes, the user shall first ascertain the potential hazards associated with the product, materials, or process and take appropriate measures to remedy such hazards by:

1. Consulting precautionary labels on materials or containers.
2. Consulting Material Safety Data Sheets or other manufacturer/supplier information. Follow all precautions recommended.
3. When working with materials that have potential for generating dust, etc., appropriate measures shall be taken to prevent such emissions; e.g., using wet process, using knife instead of dust-generating hand or power tools when cutting is necessary, etc.

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4. Isolating the immediate work area by using barricades or encapsulation or by closing doors.
5. Advising individuals who may be affected by such work; e.g., building occupants in the area. Post signs if necessary.
6. Wearing recommended personal protective equipment; e.g., respirators, eye, hand, and body protection.
7. Considering local ventilation system. Shut down or isolate air-handling systems to prevent recycling of contaminants. Open or close windows as appropriate.
8. Thoroughly cleaning up work area on completion of work. In certain situations, precleaning of work area may be necessary to reduce the likelihood of spreading surface dust. An example may be working in a ceiling crawl space.

Additional Considerations

1. Assess the product/material being used. Consider whether this is the least toxic or offensive smelling of compatible products on the market. Today there are many new less toxic products on the market which do an equal or better job compared to the old traditional products. Substitution may well be an alternative.
2. Schedule the work to take place at a time of reduced activity in the area. If possible, have the work done after normal working hours or over the weekend.
3. Where possible, cutting, sizing, and preparation of materials should be done in the shop under controlled conditions. This will eliminate or reduce the possibility of dust generation and similar emissions in the field.
4. Establishing and maintaining a good rapport with individuals who may be impacted by the project is paramount in promoting quality service and professionalism.

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