

FL0

COSHH essentials for bakers and millers



This information will help employers, the self-employed and franchisees comply with the Control of

Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure to flour dusts, etc, and protect workers health.

It is also useful for trade union and employee safety representatives.

This sheet describes good practice for managing the control of exposure to flour dust and additives (improvers).

Flour dust has a workplace exposure limit (WEL) at 10 mg/m³ (8-hour TWA).

You need to keep exposures as low as is reasonably practicable below this limit.

Complying with good control practice as set out in the other advice sheets means that exposures will normally be less than 2 mg/m³.

Advice for managers

Introduction

Stop dust getting into the air.

Flour dust can cause asthma. Improvers containing enzymes and other ingredients (eg soya, egg powder) can also cause asthma.

You need to control exposure to flour dust and other ingredients to stop occupational asthma developing. If an individual does develop occupational asthma, avoid further exposure.

Craft bakery is also associated with dermatitis. Frequent wetting of hands and contact with enzymes may cause dermatitis.

This is one in a series of advice sheets for those involved in work with flour and other ingredients

Sheets for craft bakers

- FL1 Bag opening, tipping and dough mixing
- FL2 Weighing and handling flour improvers
- FL3 Dough moulding and dividing
- FL8 Stand-alone dust collector

Sheets for craft millers

- FL5 Flour bagging

Sheets for large bakeries and plant bakers

- FL4 Flour dust control

Sheets for large bakeries and mills

- FL6 Manual addition of bulk improvers to flour in flour milling
- FL7 Cleaning

General sheets

- FL9 'Immaterial lid' design for dust collector

Assessment

Getting these sheets helps you assess the dust risk. Before acting, make sure the sheets' advice really fits your situation. Following all the advice means that you will normally comply with WELs and exposure will be as low as is reasonably practicable. Read the advice in each of the sheet(s) you downloaded. Compare it with what you do now. Put the right controls in place.

Action

You may already have the right controls in place, but are they all working properly? When were they last checked? Are they always used when needed?

You need to keep all controls in good working order. This means mechanical controls (eg dust extraction), administrative controls (eg supervision, health surveillance and testing), and operator behaviour (following instructions and using flour carefully).

Look at all aspects of the advice, don't pick and choose. The points work together to provide 'adequate control'. See sheet G406 for advice on engineering controls.

If you are in doubt, seek expert help. Remember, just because the advice means that you have to change old working practices or spend money on new controls, that doesn't make it unsuitable! Decide how to make any changes required 'across the board'.

If you do need expert help, please don't give up. Ask your trade association, trade union, or log onto www.bohs.org.

Facilities

Provide clean facilities. For information on vacuum cleaning see *Dust explosions in the food industry* Food Information Sheet FIS2 HSE Books 1993

Wet-work may lead to dermatitis. Provide pre-work skin creams that are hypoallergenic, free of fragrances and nut oils. Provide after-work moisturiser to replace skin oils.

Information, training and supervision

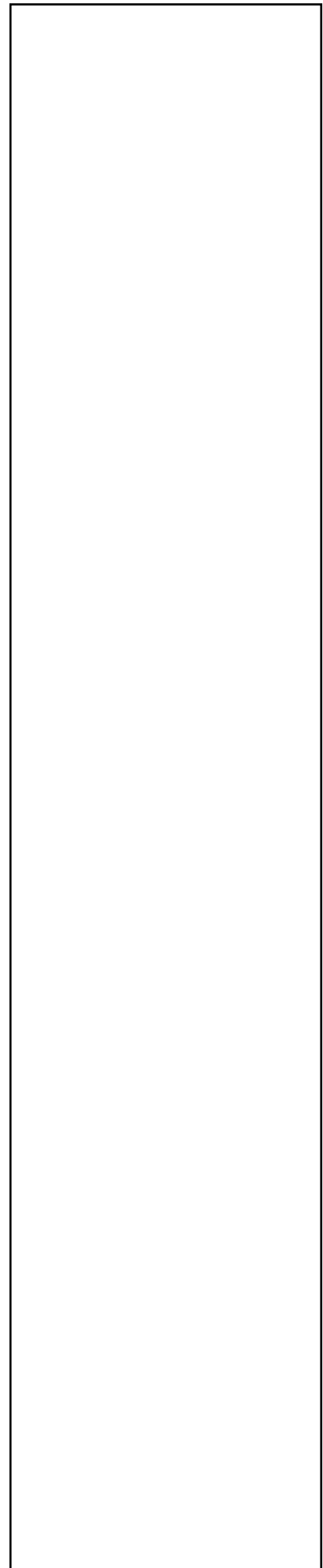
You need to carry out health surveillance for workers - see sheet G402 for occupational asthma and G403 for occupational dermatitis.

Show sustained control – keep good records.

Tell workers:

- that flour dust etc, can cause asthma and wet work can lead to dermatitis;
- to avoid breathing in dusts;
- to do the job in the correct way and minimise dust clouds;
- to use dust extraction and cleaning equipment properly;
- if equipment is not working - report it;
- to keep any respiratory protection clean and wear it properly;
- to keep surfaces clean as this helps to prevent dust being made airborne again; and
- never to sweep up or to use compressed air for cleaning.

Train and supervise workers - you need to make sure they are doing the job in the right way, and using controls properly to reduce their exposure. Include supervisors and managers in health and safety training.



Training should include:

- how to use the dust controls and how to check that they are working;
- how to maintain and clean equipment safely;
- how to use and look after personal protective equipment (PPE); and
- what to do if something goes wrong.

Supervision means checking workers:

- use the controls provided;
- follow the correct work method;
- turn up for health surveillance; and
- follow the rules on personal hygiene.

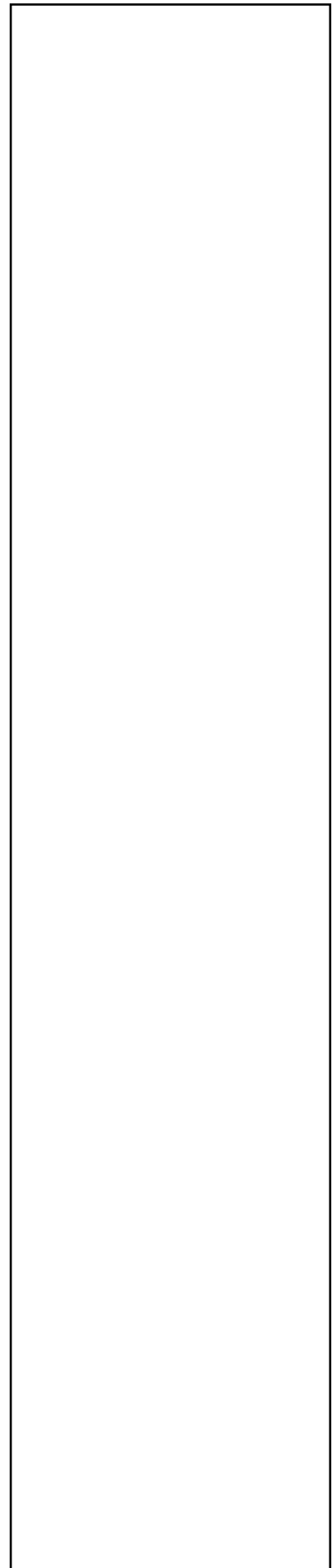
Supervise contractors: find out if they are bringing hazardous substances on site – can these affect your workers?

Environmental guidelines

Releases may be regulated within the Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) framework. You should consult your local authority or the Environment Agency.

In Scotland, consult the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA).

For more information, see www.netregs.gov.uk/netregs.



This guidance is issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Following the guidance is not compulsory 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 as illustrating good practice.