

OSHA Trade News Release

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OSHA Issues New Combustible Dust Instruction

WASHINGTON -- The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) today issued a new safety and health instruction that details OSHA policies and procedures for inspecting workplaces that handle combustible dusts and that may have the potential for a dust explosion.

"With this National Emphasis Program, we will focus our efforts on the fire and explosion hazards that may exist at facilities where combustible dusts accumulate," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Edwin G. Foulke, Jr. "A combustible dust fire and/or explosion is a potential hazard to America's working men and women. This instruction will be a valuable resource for those who inspect industrial facilities in the United States."

Combustible dusts are often either organic or metal dusts that are finely ground into very small particles, fibers, chips, and/or flakes. These dusts can come from metal, wood, plastic and organic materials such as grain, flour, sugar, paper, soap and dried blood. Dusts can also come from textile materials. Some of the industries in which combustible dusts are particularly prevalent include agriculture, chemical, textile, forest and the furniture industry.

The instruction provides detailed information on OSHA's inspection scheduling, resource allocation, inspection resources and procedures. This information is particularly useful in educating businesses on how to achieve compliance with OSHA requirements in advance of any inspection.