

# RB1

## COSHH essentials for rubber manufacturers



This information will help employers comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH), as amended, to control exposure to rubber fume and protect workers health.

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

This sheet describes good practice using general ventilation.

It covers the points you need to follow to reduce exposure to an adequate level.

It is important to follow all the points, or use equally effective measures.

### Main points

- Keep exposures to fume as low as possible.
- Make sure the controls work.

# Fume - general ventilation

## Control approach 1 General ventilation

### Hazard

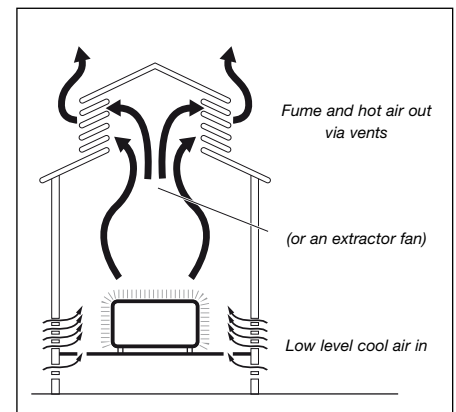
- ✓ Rubber fume is given off in making natural or synthetic rubber, when converting blended ingredients into finished parts or products.
- ✓ Rubber fume can cause cancer. There is also a risk of dermatitis.
- ✓ Keep inhalation of rubber fume as low as possible below the Workplace Exposure Limit of 0.6 mg/m<sup>3</sup> (8-hour time-weighted average) measured as cyclohexane-soluble material.

### Access and premises

- ✓ Only allow access to authorised staff.

### Equipment

- ✓ Fume is hot and tends to rise. Provide high-level air vents or extraction fans so hot air leaves the building.
- ✓ Provide low-level air inlets. Ensure that clean air is drawn into the building. Inlet air may need warming in winter.
- ✓ Ensure the flow of air into and out of the building is not obstructed.
- ✓ Good ventilation means rapid fume clearance and a through draught.
- ✓ Confirm that any fan extractors are switched on and blades are turning. Consider linking the fan with the production processes or the lighting.
- ✓ If you have an overhead travelling crane, the driver's cab needs a clean air supply.



### Personal protective equipment (PPE)

- ✓ Ask your supplier to help you select the right PPE.

### Respiratory protective equipment (RPE)

- ✓ RPE is normally needed for cleaning.
- ✓ Provide RPE with an assigned protection factor (APF) of at least 10. See sheet R2.
- ✓ Disposable RPE is acceptable - throw it away at the end of the task. Otherwise, replace RPE filters as recommended by the supplier.
- ✓ Make sure all RPE is properly fit-tested - get advice from your supplier.
- ✓ Keep RPE clean. Store it away from dust and other contaminants.

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### Maintenance, examination and testing

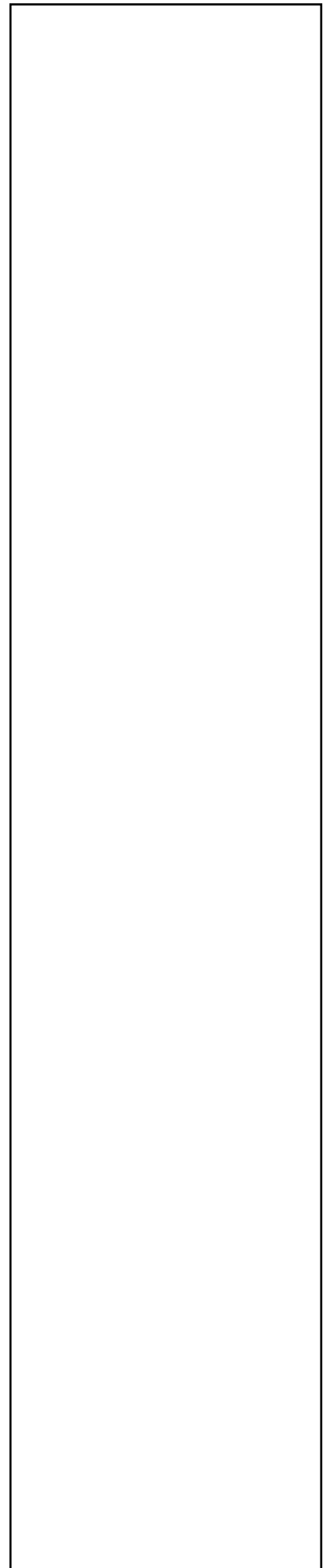
- ✓ Follow instructions in maintenance manuals - keep equipment in effective and efficient working order.
- ✓ Noisy or vibrating fans can indicate a problem.
- ✓ If an extractor fan stops or is faulty, get it repaired.
- ✓ At least once a week, check visually that the fume is clearing properly.
- ✓ Keep records of all examinations and tests for at least five years.

### Training and supervision

- ✓ Tell workers that rubber fume can cause cancer.
- ✓ Working in the right way and using the controls correctly is important for exposure control. Train and supervise workers. See sheet RB0.
- ✓ Ask your trade association for advice on training providers - see 'Useful links'.

### Further information

- *General ventilation in the workplace: Guidance for employers*  
HSG202 HSE Books 2000 ISBN 0 7176 1793 9
- *A new practical guide to complying with COSHH in the rubber industry*  
Guidance HSE Books 1997 ISBN 0 7176 1372 0
- *Respiratory protective equipment at work: A practical guide*  
HSG53 (Third edition) HSE Books 2005 ISBN 0 7176 2904 X
- *Safe to breathe: Dust and fume control in the rubber industry* Leaflet  
IACL95 HSE 1995 Web only version available at  
[www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/rubindex.htm](http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/rubindex.htm)
- For environmental guidelines, see sheet RB0



### Useful links

- The British Rubber Manufacturers Association (BRMA)  
6 Bath Place, Rivington Street, London EC2A 3JE  
Tel: 0207 457 5040 Website: [www.brma.co.uk](http://www.brma.co.uk)  
e-mail: [mail@brma.co.uk](mailto:mail@brma.co.uk).
- The British Tyre Manufacturers Association (BTMA)  
[www.btmak.com](http://www.btmak.com) e-mail: [mail@btmak.com](mailto:mail@btmak.com)  
Postal address as BRMA (above).
- The British Rubber and Polyurethane Products Association (BRPPA )  
[www.brppa.co.uk](http://www.brppa.co.uk) e-mail: [mail@brppa.co.uk](mailto:mail@brppa.co.uk)  
Postal address as BRMA (above).
- The Retread Manufacturers Association (RMA)  
PO Box 320, Crewe, Cheshire CW2 6WY  
Website: [www.retreaders.org.uk](http://www.retreaders.org.uk) e-mail: [rma@greentyres.com](mailto:rma@greentyres.com).
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Tel: 01787 881165 Website: [www.hsebooks.co.uk](http://www.hsebooks.co.uk).
- See [www.coshh-essentials.org.uk](http://www.coshh-essentials.org.uk) for other chemicals.
- For information about health and safety ring HSE's Infoline Tel: 0845 345 0055 Textphone: 0845 408 9577 e-mail: [hse.infoline@natbrit.com](mailto:hse.infoline@natbrit.com).
- Contact the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) on 01332 298101 or at [www.bohs.org](http://www.bohs.org) for lists of qualified hygienists who can help you.

### Employee checklist

- Check that any RPE works properly every time you use it.
- If you find any problems, tell your supervisor. Don't just carry on working.
- Use, maintain and store your PPE in accordance with instructions.
- Wash your hands before and after eating, drinking, smoking and using the lavatory.
- Never use solvents to clean your skin.
- Use skin creams provided as instructed.

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.