

Focus on IFA's work

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The new IFA Dust Report on occupational exposure to dust in Germany

Problem

Dust is ubiquitous and is therefore found at almost any workplace. Excessive inhalative exposure to dusts may however lead to serious diseases of the respiratory tract. It is therefore imperative that workplaces associated with elevated dust exposure be identified, and suitable measures taken to protect workers.

Companies will however not be able to perform adequate risk assessments and determine preventive measures from them unless comprehensive data on exposure to dust in the individual sectors and working areas are available which can be compared with the applicable German general dust limit values (ASGW).

Activities

Together with the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions, the IFA has prepared IFA Report 06/2020: "Occupational exposure to the inhalable and respirable dust fractions".



Cover image of the current IFA Dust Report, showing a range of work situations in which dust can occur.

Exposure data recorded from 2005 to 2016 during workplace measurements in the German Social Accident Insurance Institutions' MGU measurement system for exposure assessment, and documented in the IFA's MEGA database of measured data relating to exposure to hazardous substances at the workplace, were evaluated for production of the report. Data from 37,253 analyses of respirable dust and 36,158 analyses of inhalable dust were available for statistical evaluation.

The results of the measurements are broken down in the Dust Report by sector and working area. Further differentiation is made according to the duration of sampling and the measurement strategy (personal measurement vs. static measurement systems set up in the working areas). Experts from the accident insurance institutions supplemented the exposure data with images and explanations of the work process, activities associated with exposure and protective measures.

Results and application

The IFA Dust Report provides a summary overview of occupational exposure to dusts within the scope of the German general dust limit value (ASGW). The report is intended in the first instance as a reference source of exposure data. It serves as a register of working areas for the control of preventive measures and monitoring of exposure, and for retrospective analysis during investigation of dust exposure in relation to reported suspected cases of occupational diseases. For use in operational practice, the Dust Report provides both support in risk assessment of dusts, and guidance for the assessment of dust exposure. In addition to its use for occupational safety and health purposes, the report serves as a general source of information on dusts.

User group

The IFA Dust Report is useful to anyone tasked with assessing hazards presented by dusts at workplaces, or with assessing such hazards retrospectively during occupational disease case management. It also serves as a reference resource for anyone seeking information on the subject of dusts at the workplace.

Further information

- [IFA Report 6/2020e](#): Occupational exposure to inhalable and respirable dust fractions. Published by: Deutsche Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung e. V. (DGUV), Berlin 2021
- Arnone, M.; Gabriel S.; Mattenklott M.; Fröhlich, H.-P.; Guldner, K.; Koob, M.; Poppe M.: Arbeitsbedingte Exposition gegenüber der einatembaren und der alveolengängigen Staubfraktion. Gefahrstoffe – Reinhaltung der Luft 81 (2021) Nos 03-04, pp. 81-91

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