



Wood Products Manufacturing Operations and Wood Dust (For facilities located outside of Bernalillo County)

Wood is one of the world's most important natural and renewable resources available. Thousands of people throughout New Mexico earn their livelihood from working and processing wood, whether for furniture and other decorative products, or for household heating or agricultural use.

Wood dust is generated anytime a piece of wood is sanded, drilled, cut or otherwise machined. The largest amount of fine wood dust is produced from sanding and sawing.

Health effects

Dust from woodworking can lead to allergic reactions, skin irritation, chronic ailments such as bronchitis and asthma, and possibly cancer of the nose and sinus cavities. These health problems can go beyond those directly exposed to wood dust in the work place, and can extend outside to families, neighbors, and communities.

Respiratory protection should be used to prevent potentially serious problems.

Toxic Air Pollutants (TAPs)

New Mexico air quality regulations list wood dust as a TAP (20.2.72.400 NMAC).

TAPs are those air pollutants that are known or suspected to cause cancer or other serious health or environmental effects. The permit limits for wood dust under this regulation are:

Hard woods (beech, oak, etc.)

0.0667 pounds per hour

Soft woods (pine)

0.333 pounds per hour

If your facility has the potential to emit more than the amounts listed above to the air outside of your shop, you may need an air quality permit.

Why should I control wood dust?

Removing wood dust from the air will keep you, your family, your neighbors and community healthy and in compliance with New Mexico air quality regulations. If you are in violation you can be fined, so make sure you are in compliance.

Controlling wood dust emissions

Emissions to the outside air are commonly controlled by using the following equipment:

Cyclones for coarse materials (chips and coarse dust)

Baghouses or filters for fine materials

When used together this equipment almost completely removes dust from the air. Removing wood dust at the shop level can be done with large ventilation systems. In smaller shops, it can be more economical to use dust collection equipment only at those machines that are in operation.

Dust collection systems must be properly maintained by carefully checking for leaks. Proper equipment operation is important. Dust holding containers (such as cyclones, filters, and bags) must be emptied on a regular basis, and the wood dust must be properly disposed of or recycled.

Do you still have questions?

If so, you can contact the New Mexico Small Business Environmental Assistance Program (SBEAP) for more information and guidance regarding your business. SBEAP is not an enforcement program; we are here to help you through the air quality process.

(505) 222-9507 or 222-9583

Air quality permit application forms may be found on the website at:

www.nmenv.state.nm.us/aqb/

For Air Quality Permit Information in Bernalillo County, call the Albuquerque Air Quality Division at (505) 768-1972.

We thank you for your interest in keeping New Mexico beautiful!