

WOOD DUST - AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD WHICH INCREASES THE RISK OF RESPIRATORY DISEASE

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The main source of emission of harmful dust in the work place comes from technological processes. European legislation aims to minimize the health risks from dangerous substances in the workplace. European Directives are transferred into national legislation. Such matters as risk assessment, technical measures, and exposure limits are regulated by the law. In Poland, manufacturing processes in which hardwood dust is discharged, are considered as carcinogenic. Numerous studies have shown that occupational exposure to wood dust is strongly associated with the development of cancer of the nasal cavity and paranasal sinuses (NSC), but data regarding the development of lung cancer are conflicting and inconclusive. In the study, the exposure to inhalable wood dust was assessed among wood-workers in mid-west Poland. The assessment of occupational exposure was made on the basis of measurements of the concentration of dust in the work place. This was defined by exposure rates to dust in reference to daily work time and by comparing that to the maximum acceptable concentration values of dust defined by the regulation by the Minister of Work and Social Policy. The health assessment of workers was made on the basis of periodical medical check-ups, whose range and frequency is defined by the regulation of the Minister of Health and Social Security. The study did not show any effects of wood dust exposure on the development of lung cancer.