

4 Tips For Avoiding Explosive Dust Explosions and Fire

When working in and around machines that cut away any sort of material, one of the byproducts of the process is **dust**. When working around dust long enough, it becomes a commonplace nuisance that can easily be overlooked or ignored, resulting in a potentially dangerous workplace. Under the right conditions, the nuisance that has been building up around machinery could easily become a powder keg that could bring a sudden end to the lives of your employees. EM Plastic takes the threat of explosive dust very seriously and recommends the following tips to help keep you and your employees safe:

1. **Regular Housekeeping** – Explosive dust originates from any fine combustible particulate matter. Regular cleaning of work and “hidden” areas of dust should be considered a top priority. Hidden areas can include places such as duct work, roof beams, drop ceilings and wall joints. Be sure to use proper dust-collection systems and filters that can properly handle and control the dust created while cleaning. Using cleaning methods that generate dust clouds should always be avoided.
2. **Ignition Control** – Anything that can provide a source of ignition should be removed or minimized as much as possible. Be sure to inspect your wiring for shorts on a regular basis, adopt a method of controlling the buildup and discharge of static electricity, and control and separate any machinery or process that would create sparks from areas in which explosive dust is present.
3. **Injury and Damage Control** – Be sure to distance combustible dust areas from other areas of your building by utilizing shop walls, doorways and dust curtains to maintain a secure barrier. In addition to the basic configuration of your workspace, be sure to provide deflagration venting for your building wherever hazardous dust may be present.
4. **Provide Pressure Relief Venting** - If you have dust collection equipment, be sure to provide pressure relief venting and direct vents away from any work areas.

For more helpful tips, contact your local EM Plastic representative.