
29 C.F.R. § 1910.1043

Cotton dust.

(a) *Scope and application.* (1) This section, in its entirety, applies to the control of employee exposure to cotton dust in all workplaces where employees engage in yarn manufacturing, engage in slashing and weaving operations, or work in waste houses for textile operations.

(2) This section does not apply to the handling or processing of woven or knitted materials; to maritime operations covered by 29 CFR Parts 1915 and 1918; to harvesting or ginning of cotton; or to the construction industry.

(3) Only paragraphs (h) Medical surveillance, (k)(2) through (4) Recordkeeping—Medical Records, and appendices B, C and D of this section apply in all work places where employees exposed to cotton dust engage in cottonseed processing or waste processing operations.

(4) This section applies to yarn manufacturing and slashing and weaving operations exclusively using washed cotton (as defined by paragraph (n) of this section) only to the extent specified by paragraph (n) of this section.

(5) This section, in its entirety, applies to the control of all employees exposure to the cotton dust generated in the preparation of washed cotton from opening until the cotton is thoroughly wetted.

(6) This section does not apply to knitting, classing or warehousing operations except that employers with these operations, if requested by NIOSH, shall grant NIOSH access to their employees and workplaces for exposure monitoring and medical examinations for purposes of a health study to be performed by NIOSH on a sampling basis.

(b) *Definitions.* For the purpose of this section:

Assistant Secretary means the Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, U.S. Department of Labor, or designee;

Blow down means the general cleaning of a room or a part of a room by the use of compressed air.

Blow off means the use of compressed air for cleaning of short duration and usually for a specific machine or any portion of a machine.

Cotton dust means dust present in the air during the handling or processing of cotton, which may contain a mixture of many substances including ground up plant matter, fiber, bacteria, fungi, soil, pesticides, non-cotton plant matter and other contaminants which may have accumulated with the cotton during the growing, harvesting and subsequent processing or storage periods. Any dust present during the handling and processing of cotton through the weaving or knitting of fabrics, and dust present in other operations or manufacturing processes using raw or waste cotton fibers or cotton fiber byproducts from textile mills are considered cotton dust within this definition. Lubricating oil mist associated with weaving operations is not considered cotton dust.

Director means the Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, or designee.

Equivalent Instrument means a cotton dust sampling device that meets the vertical elutriator equivalency requirements as described in paragraph (d)(1)(iii) of this section.

Lint-free respirable cotton dust means particles of cotton dust of approximately 15 micrometers or less aerodynamic equivalent diameter;

Vertical elutriator cotton dust sampler or vertical elutriator means a dust sampler which has a particle size cut-off at approximately 15 micrometers aerodynamic equivalent diameter when operating at the flow rate of 7.4 ± 0.2 liters of air per minute;

Waste processing means waste recycling (sorting, blending, cleaning and willowing) and garnetting.

Yarn manufacturing means all textile mill operations from opening to, but not including, slashing and weaving.

(c) *Permissible exposure limits and action levels*—(1) *Permissible exposure limits (PEL)*. (i) The employer shall assure that no employee who is exposed to cotton dust in yarn manufacturing and cotton washing operations is exposed to airborne concentrations of lint-free respirable cotton dust greater than $200 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ mean concentration, averaged over an eight-hour period, as measured by a vertical elutriator or an equivalent instrument.

(ii) The employer shall assure that no employee who is exposed to cotton dust in textile mill waste house operations or is exposed in yarn manufacturing to dust from “lower grade washed cotton” as defined in paragraph (n)(5) of this section is exposed to airborne concentrations of lint-free respirable cotton dust greater than $500 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ mean concentration, averaged over an eight-hour period, as measured by a vertical elutriator or an equivalent instrument.

(iii) The employer shall assure that no employee who is exposed to cotton dust in the textile processes known as slashing and weaving is exposed to airborne concentrations of lint-free respirable cotton dust greater than $750 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ mean concentration, averaged over an eight hour period, as measured by a vertical elutriator or an equivalent instrument.

(2) *Action levels*. (i) The action level for yarn manufacturing and cotton washing operations is an airborne concentration of lint-free respirable cotton dust of $100 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ mean concentration, averaged over an eight-hour period, as measured by a vertical elutriator or an equivalent instrument.

(ii) The action level for waste houses for textile operations is an airborne concentration of lint-free respirable cotton dust of $250 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ mean concentration, averaged over an eight-hour period, as measured by a vertical elutriator or an equivalent instrument.

(iii) The action level for the textile processes known as slashing and weaving is an airborne concentration of lint-free respirable cotton dust of $375 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ mean concentration, averaged over an eight-hour period, as measured by a vertical elutriator or an equivalent instrument.

(d) *Exposure monitoring and measurement*—(1) *General*. (i) For the purposes of this section, employee exposure is that exposure which would occur if the employee were not using a respirator.

(ii) The sampling device to be used shall be either the vertical elutriator cotton dust sampler or an equivalent instrument.

(iii) If an alternative to the vertical elutriator cotton dust sampler is used, the employer shall establish equivalency by reference to an OSHA opinion or by documenting, based on data developed by the employer or supplied by the manufacturer, that the alternative sampling devices meets the following criteria:

- (A) It collects respirable particulates in the same range as the vertical elutriator (approximately 15 microns);
- (B) Replicate exposure data used to establish equivalency are collected in side-by-side field and laboratory comparisons; and
- (C) A minimum of 100 samples over the range of 0.5 to 2 times the permissible exposure limit are collected, and 90% of these samples have an accuracy range of plus or minus 25 per cent of the vertical elutriator reading with a 95% confidence level as demonstrated by a statistically valid protocol. (An acceptable protocol for demonstrating equivalency is described in appendix E of this section.)

(iv) OSHA will issue a written opinion stating that an instrument is equivalent to a vertical elutriator cotton dust sampler if

(A) A manufacturer or employer requests an opinion in writing and supplies the following information:

- (1) Sufficient test data to demonstrate that the instrument meets the requirements specified in this paragraph and the protocol specified in appendix E of this section;
- (2) Any other relevant information about the instrument and its testing requested by OSHA; and
- (3) A certification by the manufacturer or employer that the information supplied is accurate, and

(B) if OSHA finds, based on information submitted about the instrument, that the instrument meets the requirements for equivalency specified by paragraph (d) of this section.

(2) *Initial monitoring.* Each employer who has a place of employment within the scope of paragraph (a)(1), (a)(4), or (a)(5) of this section shall conduct monitoring by obtaining measurements which are representative of the exposure of all employees to airborne concentrations of lint-free respirable cotton dust over an eight-hour period. The sampling program shall include at least one determination during each shift for each work area.

(3) *Periodic monitoring.* (i) If the initial monitoring required by paragraph (d)(2) of this section or any subsequent monitoring reveals employee exposure to be at or below the permissible exposure limit, the employer shall repeat the monitoring for those employees at least annually.

(ii) If the initial monitoring required by paragraph (d)(2) of this section or any subsequent monitoring reveals employee exposure to be above the PEL, the employer shall repeat the monitoring for those employees at least every six months.

(iii) Whenever there has been a production, process, or control change which may result in new or additional exposure to cotton dust, or whenever the employer has any other reason to suspect an increase in employee exposure, the employer shall repeat the monitoring and measurements for those employees affected by the change or increase.

(4) *Employee notification.* (i) The employer must, within 15 working days after the receipt of the results of any monitoring performed under this section, notify each affected employee of these results either individually in writing or by posting the results in an appropriate location that is accessible to employees.

(ii) Whenever the results indicate that the employee's exposure exceeds the applicable permissible exposure

limit specified in paragraph (c) of this section, the employer shall include in the written notice a statement that the permissible exposure limit was exceeded and a description of the corrective action taken to reduce exposure below the permissible exposure limit.

(e) *Methods of compliance—(1) Engineering and work practice controls.* The employer shall institute engineering and work practice controls to reduce and maintain employee exposure to cotton dust at or below the permissible exposure limit specified in paragraph (c) of this section, except to the extent that the employer can establish that such controls are not feasible.

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