

## Preventing Dust Explosions

The recent dust explosion accident that claimed three workers' lives has sent a stark reminder to workplaces that deal with especially combustible dust and particles. Dust is generated in many industries such as the food, chemical, rubber and plastic processing, woodworking, and metalworking industry. The dust generated could be saw dust, metal dust or organic powders such as flour and starch. When the dust is suspended in the air in sufficient quantity and a right amount of oxygen and an ignition source are present, a dust explosion and/or fire could occur.

It is therefore important to practise good dust control in workplaces to prevent the possible risk of dust explosion.

Some recommended control measures for dust explosion risk may include:

- Installing local exhaust ventilation (LEV) systems to capture dust.
- Using suitable flame-proof equipment or non-sparking tools in areas handling combustible powders.
- Providing explosion relief vents in powder handling units.
- Separating areas handling combustible dust from other work areas.
- Implementing good housekeeping measures to prevent dust accumulation.
- Communicating the risks of combustible dust and safe handling practices to workers.

Companies are also reminded to take greater ownership of workplace safety and health (WSH). Systems can be put in place to better monitor WSH performance, such as establishing a near-miss reporting regime to encourage incident reporting by workers. Workers, on their part, are advised to report incidents timely, accurately, and to take WSH initiatives seriously.

Refer to the Ministry of Manpower (MOM)'s [Circular on the Hazards and Controls of Combustible Dusts](#) for more information.

## Risk Assessment for Working From Home

With 2020 behind us, it is now undeniable that Working From Home (WFH) has become the new norm for many in the Singapore workforce. There is a need to look at how we can protect ourselves when WFH.

The first step to ensuring safety and health is to identify home hazards that can put us at risk.

The WSH Council has produced an article that can help you identify the hazards that may be present in the home work environment along with suggested risk controls. You may wish to use the checklist in the article as a step-by-step guide for conducting a basic home risk assessment.

Read the full article [here](#).

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## A Company Example That Promotes Employees' Good Mental Well-Being

Fear, worry and stress are real threats that Singaporeans are facing amidst the Covid-19 pandemic. Working Singaporeans are concerned about contracting the virus, losing their jobs and being socially isolated due to work from home arrangements.

A recent NCSS poll of more than 900 respondents found that people experienced more psychological distress during the Circuit Breaker period last year, especially those with pre-existing mental health conditions.

Organisations can play a part to support and promote employees' mental well-being. A good example is Dow Singapore, which employed a **multi-pronged approach** in addressing the delicate needs of employees, from promoting good mental well-being to providing avenues where employees can seek help.

Click [here](#) to learn more about Dow Singapore's approach to providing psychologically safe spaces for their employees.

### **Other useful mental well-being resources**

- 1) [Tripartite Advisory on Mental Well-being at Workplaces](#) – Good practices for employers and employees to support mental well-being at workplaces.
- 2) [Total WSH](#) – A structured programme that helps companies to improve work and safety by integrating health considerations. Funding is available.
- 3) [iWorkHealth](#) – Online self-administered psychosocial health assessment tool for companies to identify common workplace stressors. Free report is available.

This is the 4th article in a year-long series on mental well-being.

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