

## CHAPTER 22

# COMBUSTIBLE DUST-PRODUCING OPERATIONS

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### User note:

**About this chapter:** Chapter 22 provides requirements that seek to reduce the likelihood of dust explosions by managing the hazards of ignitable suspensions of combustible dusts associated with a variety of operations including woodworking, mining, food processing, agricultural commodity storage and handling and pharmaceutical manufacturing, among others. This chapter provides various requirements to control ignition sources, use properly listed and designed dust collection systems, maintain good housekeeping practices and provide proper training to those involved in these processes. Appropriate standards are referenced to deal with the specific dust hazards.

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### SECTION 2201 GENERAL

**[S] 2201.1 Scope.** The equipment, processes and operations involving dust explosion hazards and use or handling of *combustible dust* shall comply with the provisions of this chapter.

#### Exceptions:

1. Storage and use of consumer materials in Group B or R occupancies.
2. Storage and use of commercially packaged materials in Group M occupancies.
3. Materials displayed in original packaging in Group M occupancies and intended as building materials or for personal or household use.
4. Storage of sealed containers of *combustible dust* at facilities not associated with an operation that uses, handles or generates *combustible dust*.
5. Materials stored or used in farm buildings or similar occupancies intended for on-premises agricultural purposes.
6. Equipment or machinery located inside buildings that emit dust but are used on an intermittent basis, including but not limited to, model shops, research and development facilities, hobby, and other non-production uses, shall be provided with a local point of use dust collection system. The dust collector can be a portable type with high efficiency filters to allow exhaust air to be discharged back into the space. Such collectors are not required to be provided with an approved explosion-control system. Such systems shall be limited to no more than 1,500 cfm.

**2201.2 Permits.** Permits shall be required for *combustible dust*-producing operations as set forth in Section 105.5.

### SECTION 2202 DEFINITIONS

**2202.1 Definition.** The following terms are defined in Chapter 2:

**COMBUSTIBLE DUST.**

**DUST COLLECTION SYSTEM.**

### SECTION 2203 DUST EXPLOSION PREVENTION

**2203.1 Critical depth layer.** The maximum dust layer on all surfaces, including but not limited to walls, ceilings, beams, equipment, furniture, pipes and ducts, shall not exceed the critical depth layer specified in Table 2203.1. The critical depth layer is permitted to be adjusted for explosion hazard where further evaluated in accordance with one of the following:

1. Section 7.2.1.3 of NFPA 654.
2. Section 4.1.3.3 of NFPA 664 for wood flour.

Accumulated *combustible dust* shall be collected by one of the methods listed in Section 2203.5.

TABLE 2203.1  
CRITICAL DEPTH LAYER

TYPE OF DUST	CRITICAL DEPTH LAYER (INCHES)
Wood flour	1/8
All other dusts	1/32

For SI: 1 inch = 25.4 mm.

**2203.2 Dust-producing and dust-handling equipment.** Dust-producing equipment and dust-handling equipment, including but not limited to vacuums, dust collection systems, dryers, mixers, blenders, separators, conveyors, storage containers, silos or other similar devices, shall be *listed* and shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended standards.

**2203.2.1 Signages and markings.** Signages and markings shall be provided in accordance with Sections 2203.2.1.1 through 2203.2.1.3.

**2203.2.1.1 Deflagration vent discharge area markings.** Where dust collection systems and other equipment, systems or system components are provided with deflagration vents, the area within the deflagration vent's discharge area shall be marked in an *approved* manner.

**2203.2.1.2 Caution signs.** Signs that read as follows shall be posted near the dust-containing equipment with deflagration vents:

CAUTION: THIS EQUIPMENT CAN CONTAIN EXPLOSIVE DUST.  
KEEP OUTSIDE THE MARKED AREA WHILE EQUIPMENT IS OPERATING.

**2203.2.1.3 Warning signs.** Where dust collection systems and other equipment, systems or system components are provided with deflagration vents, vent closures shall be clearly marked as follows:

WARNING: EXPLOSION RELIEF DEVICE. STAY CLEAR.

**2203.3 Dust-collection and dust-conveying systems.** Dust-collection and dust-conveying systems shall be in accordance with Sections 2203.3.1 through 2203.3.3.

**2203.3.1 Dust-collection systems.** Dust-collection systems shall be designed to collect dust emissions from dust-producing equipment at the point of generation. Dust-collection systems shall be in accordance with Section 511 of the *International Mechanical Code*.

**Exception:** *Closed systems* using *listed* equipment and designed in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations and specifications, where cleanouts are provided in accordance with Section 2203.3.3.

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems shall not be used as the means to collect dusts from localized sources.

**2203.3.1.1 Location.** Dust collectors shall be located outside of buildings.

**Exceptions:**

1. Dust collectors inside buildings complying with Section 511 of the *International Mechanical Code*.
2. Wet-type dust collectors specifically *listed* for the type of dust conveyed shall be permitted inside buildings where in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications.
3. Dust collectors designed to specific NFPA standards listed in Table 2205.1 for the specific type of dust conveyed.

**2203.3.1.2 Minimum conveying velocities.** The minimum velocities within ducts used as part of the dust collection system shall be in accordance with Table 2203.3.1.2.

TABLE 2203.3.1.2  
MINIMUM CONVEYING VELOCITIES

TYPE OF PRODUCT	FEET PER MINUTE
Fine light dust such as cotton, lint and wood flour (100 mesh and under)	2,000
Dry dust such as fine rubber molding powder	2,500
Average dust such as sawdust, grinding dust and coal dust	3,500
Heavy dust such as metal turnings, including aluminum and magnesium powder	4,000

For SI: 1 foot per minute = 0.00508 m/s.

**2203.3.2 Plastic ducts and conveying systems.** Plastic, fiberglass, other nonconductive ducts, duct liners or pipes shall not be used as part of ducts and conveying systems. Ductwork utilizing a combustible lining shall be permitted only in high-impact areas and where *approved*. Flexible hose shall be permitted if designed and installed in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Manufactured of static dissipative construction.
2. Used only for connections and isolation purposes.
3. Limited to 18 inches (457 mm) in length.
4. Properly grounded.

**2203.3.3 Cleanouts.** Openings in enclosed equipment and conveyors shall be provided to allow access to all parts of the equipment and conveyors to permit inspection, cleaning, maintenance and the effective use of portable fire extinguishers or hose streams. Cleanouts for ducts used as part of the dust-collection system shall be in accordance with the *International Mechanical Code*.

**2203.4 Sources of ignition.** Sources of ignition shall be controlled in accordance with Sections 2203.4.1 through 2203.4.9.5.

**2203.4.1 Classified electrical.** Classified electrical shall be in accordance with NFPA 70. Electrical motors and electrical components of the equipment shall not be installed in the dust-laden airstream unless *listed* for Class II, Division 1, locations.

**2203.4.2 Static electricity.** Bonding and grounding is required to minimize accumulation of static electric charge in the following locations:

1. Dust-producing equipment.
2. Dust-collection system.
3. Pneumatic dust-conveying systems conveying *combustible dust* from one location to another, *combustible dust* conveyors, piping and conductive components. Conveying systems include transport modes such as railcars, hopper cars, boxcars, tank cars and trucks into which or from which commodities or products are pneumatically conveyed.
4. Conveying systems using metallic piping.

**2203.4.3 Hot works.** Hot work and similar spark-producing operations shall not be conducted in or adjacent to *combustible dust*-producing areas unless precautions have been taken to provide safety. Hot work shall be permitted only in safe, designated areas in accordance with Chapter 35. Hot work is prohibited on equipment that is operating.

**2203.4.3.1 Signs.** Conspicuous signs with the following warning shall be posted in the vicinity of *combustible dust*-producing areas or in the vicinity of *combustible dust* use:

NO WELDING. THE USE OF WELDING OR CUTTING EQUIPMENT IN OR NEAR  
THIS AREA IS DANGEROUS BECAUSE OF FIRE AND EXPLOSION HAZARDS.

WELDING AND CUTTING SHALL BE DONE ONLY  
UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE PERSON IN CHARGE.

**2203.4.4 Hot surfaces and hot equipment.** In areas where a dust explosion hazard or dust flash fire hazard exists, the temperature (in degrees Celsius) of external surfaces shall be maintained below 80 percent of the lower of the dust-surface ignition temperature or the dust-cloud ignition temperature for worst-case dusts. External surfaces shall include but are not limited to:

1. Compressors.
2. Steam, water or process piping.

3. Ducts.
4. Conveyors.
5. Process equipment.

Where steam pipes or hot surfaces occur in dust-producing or dust-handling areas, accumulation of dust on the surfaces shall be minimized by an *approved* method.

**Exception:** Drying apparatus *listed* for the intended use and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**2203.4.5 Powered industrial trucks.** Powered industrial trucks used in electrically classified areas shall be *listed* for such use.

**2203.4.6 Smoking prohibited.** Smoking shall be prohibited in or adjacent to dust-producing or dust-handling areas. "No Smoking" signs complying with Section 310 shall be conspicuously posted in such areas. Smoking shall be permitted only in designated areas.

**2203.4.7 Spark-producing devices.** Spark-producing devices shall not be located within 20 feet (6096 mm) of areas requiring classified electrical unless separated by a permanent partition.

**2203.4.8 Self-heating materials.** Materials in silos and other large storage piles of particulates prone to self-heating shall be in accordance with Section 9.4.11 of NFPA 652.

**2203.4.9 Open flames and fuel-fired equipment.** Open flames and fuel-fired equipment shall be in accordance with Sections 2203.4.9.1 through 2203.4.9.5.

**2203.4.9.1 Release of airborne combustible dust.** Production, maintenance or repair activities that have the potential to release or force *combustible dust* to become airborne shall not be conducted within 35 feet (11 m) of an open flame or pilot flame.

**2203.4.9.2 Space heaters.** Fuel-fired space heaters drawing local ambient air shall not be located within electrically classified areas. Space-heating appliances in dust-producing or dust-handling areas shall be located where not subject to the accumulation of deposits of *combustible dust*.

**2203.4.9.3 Equipment listing.** Fuel-fired process equipment shall be *listed* for its intended use and shall be operated and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

**2203.4.9.4 Inspection and preventive maintenance.** Inspection and maintenance of fuel-fired process equipment shall include verification that significant *combustible dust* accumulations do not exist within or around the equipment.

**2203.4.9.5 Sources of combustion air.** In Class II electrically classified locations, heating units shall be provided with a source of combustion air ducted directly from the building exterior or from an unclassified location.

**2203.5 Housekeeping.** Accumulation of *combustible dust* on surfaces inside buildings shall be maintained below the critical depth layer in Section 2203.1. Pressurized air or similar methods shall not be used to remove dust from surfaces. Accumulated combustible dust shall be collected by one of the following methods:

1. Portable vacuum cleaners *listed* for use in Class II, Group G, Division 1, atmospheres as defined in NFPA 70.
2. Dust collection systems.
3. Other *approved* means that will not place *combustible dust* into suspension in air.

**Exception:** Forced-air or similar methods shall be permitted to remove dust in accordance with NFPA 652, NFPA 654 or NFPA 664.

**2203.6 Standard operational procedures.** Dust-producing equipment and all associated equipment, including dust-collection equipment, shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications and applicable codes. The inspection, testing and maintenance program shall include the following, as applicable:

1. Fire and explosion protection and prevention equipment, as applicable, in accordance with the appropriate NFPA standards.
2. Dust-control equipment.
3. Control of potential ignition sources.
4. Electrical, process and mechanical equipment, including applicable process interlocks.
5. Lubrication of bearings for dust-collection, dust-handling and dust-producing equipment.

6. Additional maintenance in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and specifications for dust-collection, dust-handling and dust-producing equipment.

Records shall be kept of maintenance and repairs performed. The standard operating procedures shall be submitted to the *fire code official* for review and approval. The written standard operating procedures shall be signed by the person responsible for facility operations.

**2203.7 Emergency response plan.** A written emergency response plan shall be developed for preventing, preparing for and responding to work-related emergencies, including but not limited to fire and explosion. The following information shall be developed into the plan:

1. Identification of dust hazards.
2. Identification and location of all utilities to affected areas.
3. Site plans or floor plans locating utility shutoff controls, including water, gas and power.
4. The potential for explosion.
5. Locations of fire-extinguishing equipment compatible with the hazards present.
6. Any additional information required by the *fire code official*.

**2203.8 Training.** The plans and procedures required in Sections 2203.5, 2203.6 and 2203.7 shall be *approved* by the *fire code official*. The plans and procedures shall be reviewed annually and updated as required by process changes. Initial and annual refresher training shall be provided to employees who are involved in operating, maintaining and supervising facilities that handle *combustible dust*. Initial and annual refresher training shall include:

1. Workplace hazards.
2. General orientation, plant diagrams and plant safety rules.
3. Process description or flowchart.
4. Equipment operation, safe startup and shutdown, and response to hazard conditions or an incident.
5. The location and use of all related fire and explosion protection and prevention systems.
6. Equipment maintenance requirements and practices, including visual inspections of conveyors and ducts.
7. Housekeeping requirements, including the maintenance of the critical depth layer in Section 2203.1.
8. Emergency response plans as required in Section 2203.7.

The employer shall maintain records of initial and annual training and review.

## SECTION 2204 DUST EXPLOSION SCREENING TESTS

**2204.1 Combustibility and explosivity tests.** Where combustibility or explosivity screening tests are required to analyze the *combustible dust* as part of compliance with Section 104.8 and Section 414.1.3 of the *International Building Code*, they shall be in accordance with Section 5.4 of NFPA 652.

**2204.2 Samples.** Representative samples for the screening test shall be obtained in accordance with Section 5.5 of NFPA 652.

## SECTION 2205 STANDARDS

**2205.1 Specific hazards standards.** The *fire code official* is authorized to enforce additional industry- or material-specific provisions of the codes and standards listed in Table 2205.1 to prevent and control dust explosions, as applicable.

Blue 2021 IFC New Language, Green 2021 WA State Amendment, Red Current 2018 Seattle amendments, Purple Proposed 2021 Seattle Amendments

**TABLE 2205.1**  
**EXPLOSION PROTECTION STANDARDS**

STANDARD	SUBJECT
NFPA 61	Standard for the Prevention of Fires and Dust Explosions in Agricultural and Food Processing Facilities
NFPA 68	Standard on Explosion Protection by Deflagration Venting
NFPA 69	Standard on Explosion Prevention Systems
NFPA 70	National Electrical Code
NFPA 77	Recommended Practice on Static Electricity
NFPA 85	Boiler and Combustion System Hazards Code
NFPA 120	Standard for Fire Prevention and Control in Coal Mines
NFPA 484	Standard for Combustible Metals
NFPA 654	Standard for Prevention of Fire and Dust Explosions from the Manufacturing, Processing and Handling of Combustible Particulate Solids
NFPA 655	Standard for the Prevention of Sulfur Fires and Explosions
NFPA 664	Standard for the Prevention of Fires and Explosions in Wood Processing and Woodworking Facilities

**2205.1.1 Dust hazard analysis.** If a dust hazard analysis (DHA) is required by the *fire code official* for new or existing facilities and operations, it shall be in accordance with NFPA 652. The DHA for existing facilities shall be in accordance with Section 7.1.1 of NFPA 652.