Department of **Local Government, Industry Regulation and Safety**
GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WorkSafe Western Australia

How to identify airborne contaminant hazards in manufacturing: Case study

Flour dust in a small biscuit factory

Fatima owns a small biscuit manufacturing business. She employs 10 workers in a small factory. Fatima knows that breathing in flour dust can damage her and her workers' lungs and cause health conditions like asthma. She also knows as the person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU), she has a duty under work health and safety (WHS) laws to minimise the risks to her workers' health.

Look at your workplace

So that her workers are protected from breathing in flour dust, Fatima has identified where it becomes airborne in the factory. She did this by regularly walking around the factory to see where dust clouds were being generated and where she could see a build-up of dusts on machinery, or in specific areas like the lunchroom. She also looked at the factory floor and windows for any dust through the day.

Talk and consult with your workers

Fatima also talks with and consults her workers regularly to find out where flour dust clouds are being seen and where dusts are being found where they shouldn't be. She asks what factory processes could be changed to minimise exposure to flour dust. Fatima also investigates what control measures other baking factories use.

Reassess

To address the hazards she identified, Fatima changed her biscuit making processes and implemented control measures to control the hazard and minimise the risk of workers breathing in flour dust. These changes include:

- changing the order some ingredients were mixed to stop dust clouds forming
- improving ventilation by installing a dust extractor on some of the work benches and above some of the mixing machinery
- using air cleaning equipment to remove dust from the air.

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