



## OSHA Combustible Dust Standard on the Horizon - What Every Industry Should Know

Articles / Publications

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Combustible dust, it is not the most glamorous of topics but it is an important one. Why is it important? It is important because between 1980 and 2005, combustible dust incidents claimed the lives of 119 workers and injured another 718.

There is a common misconception that combustible dust hazards primarily affect the grain handling industry. That is simply untrue. Combustible dust hazards exist in many industries and manufacturing processes including: food (e.g., candy, starch, flour, feed), plastics, wood, rubber, furniture, textiles, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, dyes, coal, metal (e.g., aluminum, chromium, iron, magnesium, and zinc), and fossil fuel power generation. The handling and processing of these materials can generate very small particles. These small particles are so light that they easily become airborne. Once airborne, the particles settle on surfaces, inside crevices, and even inside the ventilation system. It takes a little more than 1/32 of an inch of accumulation over five percent of a room's surface area to create a combustible dust explosion hazard. If disturbed, the accumulation can create a potentially explosive dust cloud.

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