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| Cover-Wood Dust 1 |

Wood Dust Mitigation and Control Audit   
Auditor Worksheet, Questionnaire and Guideline

*May 2017 v.1*

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| Cover-Wood Dust 2 |

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| Company Name: |  | Date: |  | Auditor: |  |

Table of Contents

[Wood Dust Mitigation and Control Audit Assessment Questionnaire 1](#_Toc491530370)

[1. Combustible Wood Dust Program 1](#_Toc491530371)

[2. Training and Orientation 2](#_Toc491530372)

[3. Auditing Internal/External 3](#_Toc491530373)

[4. Fire Safety Plan 3](#_Toc491530374)

[5. Management of Change 5](#_Toc491530375)

[6. Hazard Assessment 6](#_Toc491530376)

[7. Wood Dust Hazard Mitigation and Control 12](#_Toc491530377)

[Wood Dust Mitigation and Control Audit Element Guidelines and Standards 26](#_Toc491530378)

[Introduction 26](#_Toc491530379)

[1. Combustible Wood Dust Management Program 26](#_Toc491530380)

[2. Training and Orientation 32](#_Toc491530381)

[3. Auditing Internal/External 66](#_Toc491530382)

[4. Fire Safety Plan 66](#_Toc491530383)

[5. Management of Change 67](#_Toc491530384)

[6. Hazard Assessment 68](#_Toc491530385)

[7. Wood Dust Hazard Mitigation and Control 73](#_Toc491530386)

[Appendix A—References and Links 86](#_Toc491530387)

[Appendix B—Sample Interview Questions for Auditors 87](#_Toc491530388)

[Appendix C—Suggested Auditor Qualifications 88](#_Toc491530389)

***Disclaimer:*** *The purpose of this report is to provide the client with an overview of the results and comments that resulted from the recent Wood Dust Control Systems Audit at this facility. The opinions and conclusions expressed in this report are purely advisory and reflect the auditor’s best judgement based on the conditions observed at the time of the site visit, the information gathered through interviews at the site and the documentation made available to it at the time of preparation and during the visit. Unless expressly noted, this report does not refer to, or guarantee compliance with, any or all regulations which may be applicable to the practices of controlling and management the hazards associated with wood dust. The auditor assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of any kind or nature resulting from reliance upon the statements and information contained in this report.*

*Any use which a third party makes of this report, or any reliance or decisions made based on this report or any part of it, are the responsibility of such third parties. The auditor assumes no responsibility for loss or damage of any kind or nature suffered by the client or any third party as a result of decisions made or actions based on this report. It is therefore not reasonable for any individual or company to rely on this report, without first obtaining written authorization from the auditor.*

Preamble

The use of this audit with a qualified auditor and rigorous implementation of recommendation generated from the audit will aid Employers in meeting regulatory conformance. However, the completion of this audit does not imply that conformance is achieved; users of this audit must consult and apply applicable regulations and standards.

The auditor will use judgement and discretion when assessing the facility’s wood dust mitigation and control program. The auditor shall factor in the level of complexity of the operation and balance the effectiveness of the mitigation features presented against the level of hazards encountered.

General Audit Information

Confidentiality

The audit results are the property of the facility and cannot be used externally without consent of the client.

Introduction

The Employer is committed to minimizing or eliminating the risks and hazards associated with combustible wood dust.

A key component of this commitment is the process of auditing each facility’s equipment, systems and processes, specifically from a wood dust mitigation and control perspective.

The audits conducted at each facility are designed to be comprehensive and objective. The audits will provide a critical evaluation of the facility’s wood dust management practices and their effectiveness.

The Employer conducts this audit for the purposes of:

obtaining valuable input from employees, supervisors, management and others on the site as to the existence and applicability of the facility’s health and safety systems and processes, including its wood dust mitigation and control program;

reviewing individual safety program “components,” for the purpose of assessing not only their conformance (with regulations and the Employer’s expectation), but also their effectiveness;

reviewing specific “physical conditions,” for the purpose of assessing conformance with wood dust mitigation and control requirements and the Employer’s control program standards/expectations;

identifying specific areas of wood dust mitigation and control best practices;

identifying those locations where improvements can (and must) be made in order to minimize or eliminate the risks and hazards associated with combustible wood dust; and

assisting in the development of action plans and follow-up.

Audit Scope

This audit can be utilized by all manufacturing facilities that produce or utilize combustible wood dust during their manufacturing activities. The physical scope of the audit will extend from the facility’s raw material handling areas/departments through to loading and shipping areas/departments. The audit will review and evaluate several elements of an effective wood dust mitigation and control program, and will focus on the hazards associated with both combustible dust and potential ignition sources. This audit is intended to provide recommendations to the facility on the appropriate management of combustible wood dust and ignition sources. As such, this audit helps document the steps the facility is or should be taking to manage the combustible dust issue.

Pre-Audit Information Package

Prior to commencing the audit, the Auditor will request relevant background information from the Facility for the purposes of assessing the current wood dust mitigation and control plan and other relevant safety programs. This information will be requested by the auditor one month prior to the planned facility visit. This information must be provided to the auditor at least two weeks prior to the auditor’s visit to the facility. The following information (***as related to wood dust***) must be provided as a part of the pre-audit information package:

wood dust control and mitigation program;

local fire department inspection reports;

WorkSafeBC Inspection reports, variances and acceptance letters related to wood dust;

BC Safety Authority inspection reports, variances, acceptance letters related to wood dust:

hazardous location assessment report (classification) and action plan;

insurer reports;

designs, drawings and specifications for engineered dust mitigation systems;

all (internal/external) wood dust mitigation audits that have been completed in the last year;

facility fire incident/investigation reports pertaining to wood dust;

hazard and risk identification and assessment documents pertaining to the presence and accumulation of combustible wood dusts in the facility;

Hazardous location assessment and classification report (BCSA order);

Facility inspections pertaining to combustible wood dust mitigation and control programs;

Maintenance and inspection records pertaining to wood dust collection equipment.

combustible wood dust sampling and analysis, if available;

education, training, and safe work procedures used in the management of combustible wood dust;

facility’s fire safety plan and emergency preparedness and response procedures;

facility’s organization chart or a current list of site employees and supervisors to the auditor (for interview scheduling purposes).

facility’s orientation program for new hires and contractors;

safety committee meeting minutes and crew talk minutes (as applicable to dust hazards).

The auditor must factor into the audit all relevant findings, orders, instructions, and content found in the documentation above.

Audit Opening Meeting

To initiate the audit, the audit team members will meet with the senior management team and other appropriate site employees. The purpose of the meeting is to:

1) Introduce the key participants

2) Describe the purpose of the audit, how audit results will be presented (i.e., the final audit report) and to schedule a post-audit meeting.

3) Describe the audit process/procedures, including:

* documentation reviews;
* facility inspections (general and targeted);, and
* employee interviews.

Safety Indoctrination

After the audit opening meeting, the auditors must be provided with a suitable safety orientation for the facility.

Documentation Review

All aspects of the facility’s wood dust control program will be reviewed during the audit. The majority of this information is included in the Pre-Audit Information Package. Safety meeting minutes will be evaluated to see if hazards are being addressed and acted upon. Management circulars, bulletins and safety notices will be reviewed to ensure good communication is happening between management and employees. The auditor may request copies of specific documentation to assist in completion of the audit summary report.

Inspection

As part of the audit process, auditors will complete various “general” and “targeted” inspections to help assess the facility’s activities and conditions, and to determine the level/degree of program implementation and effectiveness.

Any critical or high risk dust condition that is identified during the inspection process will be immediately brought to the attention of senior management of the facility. The auditor expectation is that this condition is addressed before the audit concludes. If identified, high risk conditions (and their resolution) will be discussed in the post audit meeting.

Interviews

As part of the audit process, auditors will conduct interviews with a cross section of employees. In general, the senior management team will be interviewed, along with a mix of supervisors, charge hands, equipment operators, labourers, senior/long term employees, new/young workers, maintenance employees and contractors. The actual number of persons interviewed will be at the discretion of the auditor, but the interview process is intended to provide a representative assessment of employee knowledge of the facility’s wood dust control program and the hazards associated with combustible wood dust. Some of these interviews will be informal discussions with employees on the facility operating floor.

Audit Closing Meeting

At the conclusion of the audit, but prior to the release of the Final Report, a closing meeting will be held with the senior management team and other appropriate site employees. The purpose of the closing meeting is to provide a general overview of the audit findings, both strengths and weaknesses. Any recommendations to improve the management of combustible wood dust and ignition sources will be reviewed at the closing meeting prior to appearing in the Final Report.

Audit Results

Within one month of the post-audit meeting, the lead auditor will submit a Final Report. The Final Report will be provided by the auditor to either the Employer’s Operation Manager or the Senior Safety Manager for review and further distribution. Once reviewed, a conference call can be scheduled with the lead auditor to answer questions/clarify findings. The division has the discretion as to whether or not such a conference call is necessary.

The Final Report for the audit will include a summary matrix that assigns a colour coding to each of the various program elements. This colour coding will communicate the level of risk/opportunity based on the audit findings and will be adjusted based on the general degree of conformance for each program element as determined by the auditor. In addition, a series of recommendations will be provided to help the Employer improve the level of conformance going forward.

A matrix to facilitate evaluation on the degree of conformance for each program element and key area of focus is provided below. A legend describing the colour coded level of risk is also provided.

Degree of Compliance Matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | ***Degree of Conformance*** | | | | |
|  | | ***Exceeds Conformance*** | ***Full  Conformance*** | ***Minor  Non-conformance*** | ***Major  Non-conformance*** | ***Critical  Non-conformance*** | |
| **Area of Focus** | **Combustible Wood Dust Hazard Mitigation Program** | Fully in conformance.  Exceeds industry standard in view of auditor. Clear use of innovation in development and implementation of program. | Scope of written program includes all elements defined in audit. | Assessment and actions identified. Not written, or limited scope (written forms or checklists only, for example). | No formal written program. Ad-hoc assessment process. Unclear action. | No formal written program. No evidence of assessment. No evidence of action. | |
| **Education, Training and Communication** | Fully in conformance.  Exceeds industry standard in view of auditor. | Formal program.  All personnel trained. Demonstrated application. Effective communication of changes; ongoing training. | Formal program. Recognized gaps in training scope or quantity of personnel trained. | Informal program. Significant gaps in training scope. Significant quantity of untrained personnel. | No training program.  Little or no awareness of dust hazards and controls. | |
| **Hazard and Risk Assessment** | Fully in conformance.  Exceeds industry standard in view of auditor. For example, use of innovative approaches, scientific evaluation of dust, etc. | Combustible dust and ignition source hazards identified throughout facility. Ongoing monitoring.  Management of change in place. | Identified gaps in scope of assessment; some less critical areas not included. | A high degree of identified gaps in scope of assessment; some critical areas not included. | No assessment, or a major section of the mill excluded from the assessment (planer not included, for example) | |
| **Controls and Mitigation** | Negligible accumulations of dust on elevated surfaces throughout facility. Ignition source management and engineering controls exceed industry standard. | Generally acceptable accumulations of dust on elevated surfaces throughout facility.  Ignition sources are generally well managed. All engineering controls in place are in conformance. | Moderate accumulations of dust on elevated surfaces in isolated areas, not extensive  OR  Identified gaps in ignition source management or implementation of engineering controls. | Moderate accumulations of dust on elevated surfaces in multiple areas, not extensive  AND  Identified gaps in ignition source management or implementation of engineering controls. | Excessive accumulations of dust on elevated surfaces throughout facility. Little/no ignition source management.  Engineering controls are not in conformance or effective. | |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Severe Risk—unacceptable, risk must be reduced immediately (shutdown) |  | Moderate Risk—risk should be reduced if practicable |
|  | High Risk—unacceptable, risk must be reduced as soon as practicable |  | Low Risk—acceptable/tolerable, further risk reduction measures may not be warranted |

The auditor shall use discretion when evaluating non-conformance considering defragrable wood dust accumulation in layers greater than 1/8”, over 5% of an area taking into consideration particle size distribution, moisture content and control of ignition sources for fire hazard (ref: NFPA 664).

Wood Dust Mitigation and Control Audit Assessment Questionnaire

1. Combustible Wood Dust Program

The auditor should confirm the presence of a combustible dust control program and associated policies, guidelines and procedures and confirm if the responsibilities and duties have been clearly defined. Once determined, the auditor should use this information to support observations of the facility and interviews with the responsible parties.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation/Documentation/Interview |
| * Has the facility categorized the risks associated with combustible dust accumulations including the consideration of potential fire hazards? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does the categorization of risk include documentation that combustible wood dust hazard assessments have taken place? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does the documentation include categorization based on severity and consequence? |  |  |  |  |
| Note: The Auditor must verify that the risks associated with combustible wood dust hazards in the Facility have been correctly identified. This must be done through inspection of the Facility.  To be in conformance with this question the Auditor must confirm the facility has conducted a hazard assessment and has adequately categorized in order to prioritize their action and response. | | | | |
| * Does the facility have a combustible dust control program? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is it documented and available for review? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is someone responsible for the overall combustible dust control program and have the duties and responsibilities been clearly defined? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the overall program reviewed to determine its effectiveness? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is it reviewed on an annual basis? |  |  |  |  |
| * By management, by employees? |  |  |  |  |
| * Was a review of the previous year’s audit completed? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a review completed when process changes occur? |  |  |  |  |
| Is there an evaluation and review process for the installation of new equipment or facilities during the design phase and prior to construction? |  |  |  |  |
| * Have any new safety bulletins/regulations/guidelines related to combustible wood dust accumulation, management, mitigation and control been considered? |  |  |  |  |

2. Training and Orientation

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Does the facility have a training and orientation program? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does the training/orientation program address the combustible dust hazard? Examples are below: |  |  |  |  |
| Characteristics of combustible dust |  |  |  |  |
| Identification of combustible dust hazards |  |  |  |  |
| Methods of control for combustible dust |  |  |  |  |
| Identification and control of ignition sources |  |  |  |  |
| Fire fighting controls |  |  |  |  |
| Emergency response procedures |  |  |  |  |
| * Has the facility conducted a training needs analysis to determine what employees require specific training pertaining to combustible dust in the workplace? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are contractors/visitors subject to indoctrination and training? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the training include awareness of hazards of combustible dust? |  |  |  |  |

3. Auditing Internal/External

Internal Self Auditing/Internal/External

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Does the facility have annual internal wood dust mitigation and control audit or evaluation process? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are internal auditors educated and trained on wood dust mitigation and control? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are there defined standards and protocols used by the internal auditor? |  |  |  |  |

External Third Party Evaluations

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Does the facility have independent third party Wood Dust Evaluations once every 3 years? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there evidence that the non-conformance items from previous third party audit are corrected in a timely manner? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the results of the audits communicated to the staff and employees? |  |  |  |  |

4. Fire Safety Plan

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Has the facility developed a Fire Safety Plan in accordance with the Fire Code? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is an education and training program provided for the use of fire suppression equipment such as fire extinguishers and hoses? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are local authorities (emergency response personnel) aware of emergency response plans? Have they completed pre-incident planning inspections? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are employees given emergency response training appropriate to their individual (and collective) responsibilities? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the emergency procedures for fire and evacuation tested and evaluated on an annual basis? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are site emergency evacuation procedures posted and current? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is an effective means in place to communicate an emergency situation throughout the facility? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are employees knowledgeable about the Fire Safety Plan? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is someone designated with responsibility for the above program? |  |  |  |  |

5. Management of Change

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Does a management of change process exist? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the hazard of combustible wood dust addressed? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there an action plan to address any identified concerns? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there a follow-up component to ensure that actions are completed and appropriate controls are implemented? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are relevant policies, work procedures, etc. updated to reflect the change? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are upset conditions (i.e.; ventilation system down) identified as part of the management of change process? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is appropriate action such as increased housekeeping or equipment isolation completed until conditions return to normal? |  |  |  |  |
| * Have applicable codes and regulations been considered as part of the design and planning of new construction? |  |  |  |  |

6. Hazard Assessment

Identification of Dust

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation/Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Are all areas of the facility inspected to identify areas where combustible dust can accumulate? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is this supported with documentation or similar? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are concealed spaces such as attics, false ceilings, , hollow wall construction, crawl spaces, inside duct work, etc. included in inspections? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does the hazard assessment consider dispersion in enclosed areas and the mill in general? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does the hazard assessment consider other concerns such as seasonal conditions / issues? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there an effective method to measure the rate of dust accumulated in various areas of the facility? |  |  |  |  |
| * Has there been a hazardous location assessment conducted for the classification of electrical and gas equipment within the last 5 years or with the installation of any new equipment? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does this method include collection plates, measurement devices, visual observation, etc.? |  |  |  |  |
| * Dust accumulations are monitored at specific frequencies suitable to the rate of dust generation? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there a system in place to report wood dust accumulation to management/supervisors? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are employees aware of this reporting system? |  |  |  |  |
| * Has any testing (internal/external) of the dust at the facility been conducted to determine the particle size distribution, moisture content and deflagration index to an accepted standard (Kst, explosivity)? |  |  |  |  |
| * Has this been addressed in the hazard assessment process? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a method in place to confirm that the size and moisture content of the dust particles has not changed from the original testing? |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Note: In the absence of this information, dust should be considered hazardous. | | | | |

Identification of Ignition Sources

|  | | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Has an assessment been completed to identify ignition sources throughout the facility? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Examples of ignition sources are listed below: | |  |  |  |  | |
| Hot Work | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is a documented hot work policy and procedure in place and a permit system used? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Does the hot work policy contain standard industry requirements such as wet downs/clean up of combustibles, dedicated spark watcher, monitoring of area for 4 hours, etc.? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Hot Surfaces | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are radiant type heaters used? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Are they shielded from dust accumulation or isolated and cooled down before blow down? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are hot process pipes (steam, thermal oil) in use? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are these pipes insulated? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are cooling systems provided for equipment and are they operational as required (i.e., high speed planer, saws, etc.)? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is the equipment operation monitored or interlocked to the cooling system? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Heating Equipment | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is open flame or fuel-fired heating equipment in use? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Are the units located inside of the facility? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Have temporary open flame construction type heaters (salamanders, torpedo heaters, etc.) been identified as a potential ignition source? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is the use of temporary open flame heaters prohibited unless used for **temporary emergency** heating only? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * If/when temporary open flame heaters are used, are appropriate safety precautions taken including clear spacing from combustibles, protection of fuel line integrity, regular inspection of heater while operating, etc.? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are the combustion controls and gas train inspected and tested annually for fuel fired (natural gas, propane, fuel oil, etc.) appliances? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Friction | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Have potential friction points been identified? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are friction points monitored and cleaned on a regular basis to prevent friction based fires from occurring? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Machine and Processing Equipment | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Have motors and equipment been identified as potential ignition sources? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is the equipment inspected and maintained on a regular basis to look for overheated bearings, hot motor, sparks from equipment, etc.? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are “open drip proof” type motors in use? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * + Are they inspected and cleaned on a regular basis to minimize dust build up inside the unit? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Electrical Systems | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is electrical equipment properly isolated (enclosed room) or designed for use in a dusty environment where required (i.e.,: chipper rooms, hammer mill rooms or other areas where dust is typically in suspension during normal operation)? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Note: Wiring and electrical is typically Hazardous Classification II, Division I or II in these specific areas. | | | | | | |
| Is a hazard and risk assessment completed on the potential electrical ignition sources (lighting, MCC cabinets, etc.) prior to completing any blown downs or wash downs of the area? | |  |  |  |  | |
| If an electrical ignition hazard is identified, is all equipment (including lighting) de-energized prior to completing any blow downs or wash downs in the immediate vicinity? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * If dust is expected to have settled in equipment that is not dust tight, is this equipment cleaned before re-energizing? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Note: Focus on diligent housekeeping practices within the vicinity of such equipment (5 ft as a general rule at or near floor level, 10 ft minimum at roof/ceilings) to at least help reduce the potential of the equipment becoming an ignition source in the event of electrical overheating or arcing | | | | | | |
| Smoking | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is smoking controlled and strictly monitored? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are outdoor designated smoking areas provided? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are appropriate containers provided for the disposal of cigarette butts? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Lightning | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are dedicated lightning rods provided and do they conform to regulations/codes? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Alternatively, are lightning arrestors provided for high voltage gear? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Static Electricity | |  |  |  |  | |
| When combustible dusts or other materials pass through a duct, static charges on the duct are generated. If a charge is allowed to accumulate on an electrically insulated portion of a duct system it could discharge and ignite the material being conveyed. For this reason, exhaust systems carrying combustible dusts should be electrically bonded and grounded. | | | | | | |
| * Is bonding and grounding provided on all pneumatic duct work that conveys combustible dust? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Has grounding been provided to baghouse cages? | |  |  |  |  |
| * Is flexible rubber or plastic type ducting utilized anywhere in the system? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Is this ducting grounded and bonded? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is there a process in place to inspect the grounding and bonding of dust pneumatic conveyance systems? |  | |  |  |  | |
| Tramp Metal | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Is metal detection, magnetic separation or air density separation provided prior to fractionating equipment (chippers, hogs, planer, etc.)? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are floor level suction systems (floor sweeps) provided? Are they equipped with magnets on the throat to capture tramp metal? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are they equipped with magnets on the throat to capture tramp metal? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Facility Lighting | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are HID (high intensity discharge), halogen, incandescent type or other lighting used where the lamp operates at high temperatures? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Have other types of lighting which generate less heat such as fluorescent or LED fixtures been investigated? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are the lamps adequately protected or shielded with covers that will prevent dust from coming in contact with the hot surface of the lamp? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * If metal halide type lighting is used with open fixtures not having a containment barrier are double-walled (type O lamps) used? | |  |  |  |  | |
| Note: Luminaries using metal halide lamps should be equipped with a containment barrier that encloses the lamp unless type O lamps are used. | | | | | | |
| * Open fixture metal halide lights are cycled off at least weekly, for 15 minutes? | |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are “dust tight” type light fixtures utilized in dusty environments such as chipper or screener rooms? | |  |  |  |  | |

7. Wood Dust Hazard Mitigation and Control

Control—Housekeeping

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Does the facility have an established housekeeping standard? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are workers and supervisors trained in this standard? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are dedicated clean-up crews provided? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is housekeeping performed on a regular basis to prevent accumulations from exceeding 1/8” thick over 5% of the compartment area? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are regular cleaning frequencies established for walls, floors and horizontal surfaces of equipment, ducts, pipes, hoods, beams, ledges, suspended ceilings, etc.? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are spaces inaccessible to housekeeping sealed to prevent accumulations? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are housekeeping logs maintained? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there a written safe work procedure for clean-up and the use of compressed air? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a hazard and risk assessment completed prior to using compressed air to clean when the pressure is in excess of 15 psi?   + Including the identification of possible ignition sources. |  |  |  |  |
| * Are alternative methods (such as brooms, air/water wands, vacuuming) considered and used before compressed use for clean-up? |  |  |  |  |
| * If vacuum systems are used, are they properly certified, bonded and grounded? |  |  |  |  |

Control—Passive Containment

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * The Auditor should verify whether passive controls are in use as well as their effectiveness at containing dust accumulations at the source. Confirmation should be made through physical inspection.   + Has the passive containment created an additional/new hazard? |  |  |  |  |
| Primary Machine Centres |  |  |  |  | |
| * Are passive containment controls in place at major machine centres such as: * Debarkers * Canters * Edge trimmers/gang saws * Planer/moulder * Chippers/Hogs * Conveyors/Transfer points * Drop outs/chutes |  |  |  |  |
| * Based on physical observation does it appear that passive containment features are effective in containing dust at the source? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is debris diverted away from potential ignition sources such as high speed bearings and electrical motors? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are curtains or other type of enclosures provided to prevent wood dust from drifting into other areas? |  |  |  |  |
| Note: Curtains or enclosures should ideally be non combustible. If vinyl “strip” type curtains or doors are used, it should be confirmed that the material has an acceptable flame spread rating (ASTM-E84 Class A; <25 flame spread index recommended) and that the material used is “self extinguishing.” The use of temporary enclosures such as plastic tarps or plastic sheeting (construction polypropylene) is strongly discouraged due the high potential for rapid flame spread and smoke development. | | | | |
| Conveyors |  |  |  |  | |
| * Have conveyors been equipped with slides, baffles or ramps at transfer points to guide material into conveyors rather than having large drops which can cause dust plumes? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the speed of the conveyor adequate to move material at a controlled speed rather than “flinging” material off the end of tail spools and drums? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are enclosed conveyors that have a potential for high dust concentration equipped with a dust collection system or mister to prevent the potential for deflagration? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are belt scrapers provided on conveyors at the tail spools? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is conductive belting used where dry material is conveyed (planer shavings, sawdust, etc.) to prevent material from “clinging” to the belt as a result of static accumulation? |  |  |  |  |

Control—Construction Features

The use of proper construction is crucial to prevention and mitigation of loss from fire and explosion in wood handling facilities where a dust hazard exists. Use of proper materials and construction features can reduce dust and debris accumulations, simplify and complement good housekeeping practices, and limit communication and damage should an event occur.

Where a dust hazard exists, new buildings should be constructed of non-combustible or FM approved Class I materials with fire walls, structural elements, walls, arches, floors, and roofs are of approved non-combustible or limited-combustible materials. Alternately, roof structures utilizing glue laminated beams/heavy timber type construction should also be investigated as this type of construction eliminates “pockets” along the ceiling structure inside the I-beams and purlins where dust can accumulate.

Existing buildings that are primarily combustible construction should ensure that upward facing horizontal members are minimized. Where present, areas such as open wood truss roof structures or open wood stud walls should have the open areas enclosed with a material offering a level of fire resistance such as plywood, type X drywall or sheet metal.

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| * Have building design features been utilized/ incorporated to complement housekeeping and reduce dust accumulations? |  |  |  |  |
| * Have rooms and buildings with potential for combustible dust explosion been correctly identified? Examples could include chipper, screener, hog or sander enclosures. |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the interior surfaces of the building designed to facilitate cleaning? |  |  |  |  |
| *Note: Have features such as high gloss paint or enclosing open stud walls/ceilings with plywood or sheet metal can assist with housekeeping and minimize dust accumulation?* | | | | |
| * Are structural steel members with ledges and horizontal surfaces boxed in or enclosed? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are all enclosed areas fully sealed to prevent dust from entering the enclosure? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are windows, ledges, girders, beams and other horizontal surfaces including light fixtures provided with sharply sloped surfaces (40º—60º) to minimize dust deposits? |  |  |  |  |

Control—Misting

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The Auditor should verify whether misting controls are in use as well as their effectiveness at controlling dust accumulations. The Auditor should also evaluate whether the systems are viable for use during winter months and should recommend the Facility consider alternatives if systems are deemed inoperable during cold weather. |  |  |  |  |
| * Are water misting systems utilized to effectively control and contain the dust hazard? |  |  |  |  |
| * Have the areas been analyzed to ensure the misting system will not create an opposing impact in preventing dust from being conveyed and potentially caking and fouling other areas and mechanical components with wet dust? |  |  |  |  |
| * Have the impacts of misting systems on the effectiveness of the ventilation systems been analyzed to ensure that additional moisture will not cake or foul the duct work? |  |  |  |  |
| * Can the misting system be operated in the winter months? If not, is there an alternative control in place? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a daily self-inspection program in place to ensure that misting systems are operational prior to equipment start up? |  |  |  |  |

Control—Engineered Ventilation Systems

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation/Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| General Requirements for Dust Collection Systems | | | | |
| This section has been broken down to include general questions as well as questions specific to both baghouses (pressurized sock type collectors) and cyclones due to the significant difference in the hazard presented. | | | | |
| * Has the system been designed and/or reviewed by a qualified contractor or Engineer? Is documentation available for review to support this? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the explosion and suppression system of dust extraction systems tested (operational test) and calibrated on a regular basis (minimum annually), to ensure the system operates within designed parameters? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there a Kst of the dust tested when there is an equipment or process modification? |  |  |  |  |
| * Have changes or additions to the dust collection system equipment, design and installation been conducted and approved by a qualified engineer able to determine the adequacy of the system? |  |  |  |  |
| Is documentation available for review to support this? |  |  |  |  |
| * Based on observations and physical conditions noted, does it appear that the dust collection system is effective at capturing dust at the source? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the dust collection and transfer equipment located outside, away from important buildings and utilities? |  |  |  |  |
| * Has a separate dust-collection system been provided for the welding or filing shop (or similar) to ensure sparks are not collected by a system conveying wood dust? |  |  |  |  |
| Cyclones | | | | |
| Cyclones vent wood fines/dust through the top of the unit and should be vented to the exterior of the building to prevent wood dust accumulation inside of the building. The explosion potential is not considered as high with a cyclone due to the open venting at the top of the unit, however if the vent pipe is connected to other equipment such as blower fans (pull through design) or a baghouse, explosion venting should be provided.  Ideally cyclones located outside of any building. NFPA 664 permits the installation of cyclones indoors under the following conditions:  1. If there is no deflagration or fire hazard  2. If the unit is equipped with a deflagration suppression system  3. If the unit is equipped with relief vents that extend to safe areas outside the building and meets collector strength requirements  4. If the unit is equipped with deflagration relief vents exhausting through listed flame quenching devices and meets collector strength requirements | | | | |
| * Are cyclones located indoors and if so do they satisfy the conditions outlined in points 1—4 above? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the cyclone provided with explosion venting? |  |  |  |  |
| Note: The cyclone vent pipe at the top of the unit should be open to atmosphere (typical configuration is an elbow discharging to atmosphere). If venting is provided in another location, refer to the venting section recommendations under baghouses. | | | | |
| If the vent pipe is connected to other equipment such as blower fans (pull through design) or a baghouse, alternate venting should be provided to prevent backpressure and blowback. Venting should be designed by a qualified engineer with supporting documentation available for review. | | | | |
| * Has grounding been provided for the cyclone and associated duct work? |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Note: Although this question is asked under static electricity, it is worth re-confirming for pneumatic duct work | | | | |
| Baghouses | | | | |
| Is a documented self-testing and inspection procedure in place for any protective equipment on a baghouse or cyclone ventilation system? |  |  |  |  |
| Protective Equipment | | | | |
| * Is sprinkler protection (manual or automatic) provided inside of the baghouse?   + If manual is there training and an SOP provided? |  |  |  |  |
| Note: Protection should either consist of a dry pipe type system with fusible link heads or else a “quick connect” type system with open heads. | | | | |
| * If the system is provided with a “quick connection” is a heat detector provided inside the unit to notify employees of a potential emergency situation? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are baghouses which are connected to known spark producing equipment such as high speed sanders, planers, chippers, etc. . been provided with an approved and listed spark detection and suppression system? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a high speed abort gate provided as a secondary protection zone after the spark detection/suppression system and abort prior to the baghouse? |  |  |  |  |
| * Have baghouses which return filtered air back inside of any buildings been equipped with a high speed abort gate (or other similar effective device) to divert the force of an explosion and any burning material away from the building? |  |  |  |  |
| Deflagration Venting/Isolation Devices/ | | | | |
| * Has deflagration/explosion venting been provided on the baghouse to vent the force of an explosion? |  |  |  |  |
| Note: The venting should be designed by a qualified engineer with supporting documentation available for review. | | | | |
| * Is the venting either shielded or directed away from buildings (or other items subject to fire or pressure damage) and areas where personnel congregate? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is clear space maintained on both sides of a vent to enable operation without restriction and without impeding a free flow through the vent? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are swing type gates used for explosion venting? Are devices in place (i.e.; latches, springs, etc.) to ensure they cannot re-close and create vacuum conditions that can collapse/implode the protected equipment? |  |  |  |  |
| * Has a distance of at least two explosion vent diameters between an explosion vent outlet and any large, fixed, flat obstruction (i.e., shielding) been provided? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are rupture disks or blast panels provided with safety cables/chains, physical shielding (see point above regarding spacing) or similar to prevent the panels from discharging from the unit and becoming potential projectiles in the event of an explosion? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the explosion venting clearly labelled and marked to warn personnel of the potential hazards? |  |  |  |  |
| * Has a rotary air lock been provided on the baghouse to prevent the communication of burning material to other areas of the process? |  |  |  |  |
| * Has a counter-weighted back draft damper been provided on the infeed duct leading to the baghouse? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does the sequential shutdown logic allow continuing circulation of airflow?  **Note:** the airflow should prevent a possible dust explosion inside the baghouse |  |  |  |  |
|  | | | | |
| Preventative Maintenance | | | | |
| * Is a preventative maintenance/self inspection program in place with supporting documentation? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the baghouse unit, including the bags, cages and associated duct work properly grounded and bonded? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the grounding straps (i.e. cages straps) inspected and their integrity maintained? |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Note: Although this question is asked under static electricity, it is worth re-confirming for pneumatic duct work and dust collectors. | | | | |
| * Is there a written program defining the frequency of inspections of the baghouse structure, the bags and the unit grounding? Is this documented and available for review? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the baghouse unit and associated equipment inspected as per the manufactures guidelines, or annually at minimum? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a preventative maintenance program in place for the regular (as recommended by the manufacturer) self-testing, inspection and cleaning of both the spark detection eyes and suppression nozzles if applicable? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a preventative maintenance program in place for the regular (i.e., semi-annual) inspection and testing of components such as high speed abort gates and back draft dampers? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is there evidence of preventive maintenance programs and tests on the efficiency on engineered ventilation systems? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a preventative maintenance program in place to periodically inspect dust collection units and their associated duct work (recommended annually or as required) to ensure that they are free from obstructions? |  |  |  |  |
| Storage Silos and Bucket Elevators | | | | |
| Storage silos used to store dry saw dust or planer shavings have the potential for a deflagration if an ignition source is introduced. In addition the silos have the ability to accumulate a static charge as the material is being moved into or out of the silo. Deflagration venting and grounding should be provided for the silo unit.  Bucket elevators are often used to transfer material into storage silos. Bucket elevators can create potential ignition sources due to belt or bucket misalignment or belt slippage. Alignment and rotation monitors and interlocks should be provided in addition to properly designed explosion venting. | | | | |
| * Are storage silos equipped with properly designed explosion venting? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the storage silos grounded? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are automatic sprinklers or a dry type deluge system with a ‘quick connection’ provided for the storage silo? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the storage silo equipped with heat detection? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are bucket elevators provided with properly designed explosion venting? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are bucket elevators grounded? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are bucket elevators equipped with belt slippage/rotation monitors and belt alignment monitors? |  |  |  |  |
| Are these monitors interlocked to stop operation of the bucket elevator? |  |  |  |  |
| Enclosureless Dust Collectors (EDCs) | | | | |
| NFPA 652 – 2016, *Standard on the Fundamentals of Combustible Dust,* defines an enclosureless dust collector (EDC) as, “An air-material separator (AMS) designed to separate the conveying air from the material being conveyed where the filter medium is not enclosed or in a container”. EDCs may also be known as Positive Pressure Open Dust Collectors.  Enclosureless dust collectors (EDCs) are commonly used in the woodworking industry and home woodworking shops.  Some risks from traditional explosions are reduced with compliant EDCs since creation of projectiles would be limited given the fabric filter bags used in construction.  Yet, deflagration and flash fires risks remain.  NFPA 664 *Standard for the Prevention of Fires and Explosions in Wood Processing and Woodworking Facilities,* and NFPA 654 *Standard for the Prevention of Fire and Dust Explosions from the Manufacturing, Processing, and Handling of Combustible Particulate Solids,* allow indoor use of the EDCs, subject to specific requirements: | | | | |
| * Are Enclosureless dust systems (EDC’s) appropriate for indoor use? |  |  |  |  |
| * The collector is used only for dust pickup from wood processing machinery (i.e., no metal grinders or similar) and is not used on sanders, molders, or abrasive planers having mechanical material feeds through the machine. |  |  |  |  |
| * The filter medium is not shaken or pressure-pulsed to dislodge dust during operation |  |  |  |  |
| * The collected dust is removed daily or more frequently if necessary to ensure efficient operation |  |  |  |  |
| * Active protection is provided for the EDC’s:  automatic sprinkler located above the unit or spark detection and extinguishing system in the main duct, upstream of the unit. |  |  |  |  |
| * The collector is located at least 6.1 m (20 ft.) from any means of egress or area routinely occupied by personnel |  |  |  |  |
| * Multiple collectors in the same room are separated from each other by at least 6.1 m (20ft.) |  |  |  |  |
| * Each collector has a maximum air-handling capacity of 2.4 m3/sec (5000 cfm) |  |  |  |  |
| * The fan motor is of a totally enclosed, fan-cooled design |  |  |  |  |

Control—Preventative Maintenance

|  | Yes | No | N/A | Observation /Documentation/Interview |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Electrical System Preventative Maintenance | | | | |
| The consideration should first be to control wood dust accumulation and airborne contaminants. If this is impracticable, the secondary consideration should be to ensure the electrical and gas equipment is properly classified for the hazardous location.  For areas where dust cannot be controlled or equipment does not meet regulated requirements, electrical equipment should be located inside dedicated rooms provided with slightly positive air pressure and a constant, relatively cool temperature. All electrical room doors and the cabinets inside these rooms should be tightly closed, sealed and latched. There should be no combustible materials anywhere inside these rooms. This will help ensure that this equipment operates as designed and separates a potential ignition source from combustible wood debris.  In situations where a separate room cannot be provided, sufficient housekeeping must be conducted so that all electrical equipment is free of both coarse and fine wood dust accumulations. This includes areas on top of electrical cabinets, inside the cabinets, and on the floor next to the cabinets.  Switchgear and other electrical equipment should undergo regular, quick visual inspections. Switchgear should be found operating in a clean, cool, dry and tight environment with no abnormal noises, smells, vibration or heat. All electrical cabinet/room doors should be tightly closed. Areas found with unacceptable levels of dust accumulations should be cleaned right away using a method that is appropriate for the area and hazard, and further investigation should be conducted into the nature of the dust infiltration. Vacuuming is the preferred choice for cleaning inside electrical enclosures. Electrical equipment should be locked-out and de-energized before cleaning. | | | | |
| * Is electrical equipment properly maintained and inspected regularly to ensure they do not fail unexpectedly and create an ignition source? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is infrared scanning conducted on the electrical distribution system at minimum on an annual basis? |  |  |  |  |
| Is it performed by qualified personnel (i.e., Thermography Certification)? |  |  |  |  |
| Does the survey include all switchgear, MCC, bus bars, and power transformers? |  |  |  |  |
| * If an infrared camera with imaging capabilities is not available, is there another option to monitor the temperature of bolted connections? i.e., using a non-contact thermometer. |  |  |  |  |
| * Are “hot spots” identified during infrared scanning promptly repaired? Are the repairs documented and available for review? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are repairs documented with a follow up scan performed to ensure the “hot spot” has been eliminated? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does a schedule exist for MCC panel inspection and cleaning? |  |  |  |  |
| Note: Prioritization is based on evaluation of accumulation rates | | | | |
| * Is all temporary wiring and use of portable electrical equipment (e.g., radios, fans, and heaters) eliminated where possible? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is all electrical wiring, fittings and other devices properly sealed and maintained? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the MCC rooms positive pressurized and properly isolated where located in hazardous areas? If not are they kept clean? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are these rooms inspected regularly (i.e., monthly) to ensure there is no dust ingress into the room or combustible storage? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the MCC cabinets visually inspected to ensure the cabinet doors and access covers for energized electrical equipment are closed and secured with all fasteners in place? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are electrical rooms fully enclosed with cable openings sealed with an approved firestop material? |  |  |  |  |
| * Are the electrical rooms of non-combustible construction?  If not, is automatic sprinkler protection provided?” |  |  |  |  |
| Note: electrical rooms containing MCC panels switch gear and dry type transformers are permitted to be combustible construction provided that automatic sprinkler protection is provided. | | | | |
| * Is inspection, calibration and testing of switch gear (i.e., megger testing) conducted every 3—5 years by a qualified contractor? |  |  |  |  |
| Is documentation available for review? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is cleanup of electrical equipment, motor control centers (MCCs), electrical rooms, disconnects and power distribution centres performed regularly, by qualified electricians? |  |  |  |  |
| A hazard and risk assessment is performed prior to cleanup activities. |  |  |  |  |
| * Process controls, equipment, and machinery are inspected, tested, and maintained in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommended guidelines and safe practices? |  |  |  |  |
| Is documentation available for review? |  |  |  |  |
| Mechanical Preventative Maintenance | | | | |
| A preventative maintenance program can vary from a highly complex computerized system that generates and tracks work orders to a paper based system that requires manual entry for tracking.  The key component for the auditor to confirm is the overall effectiveness of the program with a focus on maintenance items which can pose a fire risk. This can be verified by visual observations, document reviews or interviews with maintenance staff. | | | | |
| * Is a formal preventative maintenance program in place? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is the program predictive or reactionary? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a method in place to log and track items requiring repair or that have been repaired? |  |  |  |  |
| * Does the program include the inspection of friction producing equipment such as bearings, conveyor spools, belt drives,, etc.? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is vibration monitoring conducted on rotating equipment? |  |  |  |  |
| * Is a thermal/infrared scan performed periodically on large motors and high speed bearings (i.e., planer)? Alternately, is a hand held heat gun used to periodically monitor the bearing temperature? |  |  |  |  |

Wood Dust Mitigation and Control Audit Element Guidelines and Standards

Introduction

These industry guidelines have been developed for the identification and mitigation of combustible wood dust produced in woodworking operations. The guidelines are as a result of two catastrophic sawmill explosions that occurred in northern British Columbia during 2012. Although the exact cause of the explosions remains under investigation, combustible wood dust is assumed to have been a determining factor. Recent laboratory testing of combustible wood dust has shown the dust to be explosive under certain conditions which include moisture content and particle size.

Many woodworking facilities process feedstock with high moisture content and the resulting dust is large and coarse in nature. These dynamics can change if the sawdust is allowed to accumulate on elevated surfaces which typically allow the dust to dry out and become smaller in size. The woodworking facility should operate under the assumption that dust on elevated surfaces may be explosive under certain conditions and should work towards identifying the hazard and mitigating the risk.

Housekeeping and hazard identification relating to sawdust is paramount for a safe operation as sawdust accumulation and management contributes to a significant hazard within a woodworking facility.

The intent of these guidelines is to focus on the hazard presented by fine, dry wood dust and do not necessarily apply to accumulations of coarse green material (sawdust) that typically builds up on floors or basement areas.

The guidelines listed below are not intended to be a comprehensive study of the hazards of combustible wood dust. The guidelines have been designed to assist the auditor in assessing the hazard of combustible wood dust at woodworking facilities and to demonstrate industry best practices and mitigation strategies.

1. Combustible Wood Dust Management Program

Combustible Wood Dust Program

The Facility must be able to demonstrate they have a written combustible wood dust management program including a policy and procedures for the management of combustible wood dust. The required policy and procedures of the written program can be contained in the Facility’s existing safety management system, maintenance program or as a standalone program.

The auditor should confirm the presence of a combustible dust control program and confirm if the responsibilities and duties have been clearly defined. The program should be considered a ‘working document’ that is reviewed by management and employees on a regular basis and is periodically revised to include information such as new safety bulletins, industry regulations/guidelines etc. The document should also be revised when process changes occur.

Once it has been determined that a combustible wood dust program is in place, the auditor should use this information to conduct interviews with the responsible parties.

A combustible dust control program should include some or all of the following elements:

An identification of combustible wood dust in the workplace

When wood dust is allowed to accumulate on elevated surfaces such as horizontal members (purlins, ledge, cable trays, MCC panels, etc.) or allowed to build up on wall surfaces the possibility exists for a flash fire or explosion if a concentration of dust becomes airborne with an ignition source present. This risk can be mitigated through proper identification and remediation of the hazard.

An identification of ignition sources

Ignition sources can include hot work, hot surfaces, heating equipment, friction, machine and processing equipment, electrical systems, smoking, lightning, static electricity, tramp metal/foreign material and facility lighting

A hazard assessment process

The combustible dust control program should include a means and method of evaluating wood dust accumulation rates throughout the facility.

The combustible dust control program should recognize dust and debris build up within concealed spaces.

Risk categories for dust accumulation should be defined with associated priorities and action plans outlined.

A hazard mitigation and control process

A corrective action management process

A method for tracking and logging completion of the action items identified during internal tours or inspections should be implemented.

A hazard change management process

As part of the combustible dust program and hazard identification, change management process should be in place to determine any increased risks are present due to a change in equipment or processes.

A fire incident investigation process

Operational responsibilities and accountability

Orientation and training of employees and contractors

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

An annual program review process

The Auditor is to only identify if all the elements specified in the question exist. The remainder of the Audit will determine the Facility’s conformance with these program elements.

Management Review

The Auditor must verify through interview and review of relevant documentation that:

An annual program review process exists

A review of the program took place

An annual review should include some or all of the following:

A review of the previous year’s Audit

Confirmation that action items from previous Audit were completed or are in progress (documentation and field verification)

Consideration for new regulations/guidelines related to combustible wood dust accumulation, management, mitigation and control

Consideration for changes to facility, process, etc.

Updated policy and procedures (if necessary)

Assigned Responsibility

As part of the combustible wood dust management program, roles and duties must be clearly defined. A documented list should be developed which outlines the responsibilities of the personnel participating in the program.

The Facility must be able to provide a written list or matrix that identifies areas of responsibility and who at the Facility are assigned these responsibilities.

Areas of responsibility should include:

Orientation and training of employees

Hazard assessment processes

Audit program including inspection, measuring and monitoring of combustible wood dust accumulations

Tracking and completion of corrective actions

Housekeeping

Engineered dust mitigation and controls (ventilation, construction features, passive containment, misting systems)

Electrical/Mechanical PM program

Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan

Annual combustible wood dust program review

If the Auditor determines the Facility is not in conformance with this question the Auditor must identify the missing areas of responsibility to the Facility.

Qualified Personnel

The Auditor must verify that personnel assigned to individual areas of responsibility are qualified to manage those areas.

A person shall be considered qualified by their training, education or experience or any combination of these three criteria.

Verification shall be made through interviews of individuals, review of training records, and other means. There will undoubtedly be some subjectivity to the assessment but the intent is to ensure that people having responsibility for the dust management program are knowledgeable in their assigned areas, are actively involved in the program and are providing more than pure administrative contributions.

If individuals who were found not to be qualified to manage the areas of responsibilities assigned to them, the Auditor must identify them to the Facility’s Manager.

Risk Categories

As part of the hazard and risk identification, a risk categorization system should be in place at the facility. The risk categories should have action plans associated with each hazard classification.

In many instances, dust fires precede catastrophic explosions. In fact, a dust fire where an explosion has not yet occurred may present the most dangerous situation.

For a fire to occur it needs a source of ignition, (heat or flame) and a potential source of fuel and oxygen. If the ignition sources and fuel can be kept apart, removed, eliminated or reduced, then the risks to people and business is minimized. In order to do this, sources of ignition, fuel and oxygen must be identified in the workplace.

Identify any sources of ignition, (heat or flame). All workplaces will contain heat/ignition sources; some will be obvious such as open flames (heating or process). Others may be less obvious such as heat from chemical processes or electrical equipment.

Possible sources of ignition are:

* Defective electrical fittings and defective or misuse of electrical apparatus – light bulbs and fluorescent tubes too close to combustible materials, misuse or defective electrical extension leads and adapters, faulty or damaged wiring.
* Matches, Lighters, and Smoking materials.
* Flame or sparks from a work process such as welding, cutting, grinding or the use of a hot air gun.
* Sources of frictional heat.
* Electrostatic discharges.
* Ovens, kilns, open hearths, furnaces or incinerators.
* Boilers, engines and other oil burning equipment.
* Portable heaters.
* The threat of arson must not be overlooked and the malicious firing of combustible materials.

Potential sources of fuel and unsafe situations:-

* Any combustibles –paper, wood, cardboard, etc.;
* Any unsafe procedures or acts – Persons undertaking unsafe acts such as smoking next to combustible materials.
* Any unsafe conditions – These are hazards that may assist a fire to spread in your workplace, e.g. if there are large areas of hardboard or polystyrene tiles etc., or open stairs that can cause a fire to spread quickly, trapping people and involving the whole building.
* One hazard that is often overlooked is bad housekeeping and is the easiest to correct. It is responsible for many small fires either starting or certainly spreading and involving far more of the premises than was necessary.

The Auditor should look for documented categorization of the risk associated with the combustible wood dust hazard. Categorization should include some form of quantification of risk based on several factors including but not limited to the following:

Accumulations

Significant dust clouds (potential/actual)

Ignition sources

Dust properties

Existing controls

An action/response should be associated with each category and will depend on severity and consequence.

An example of risk categorization is as follows (the categorization at the Facility may differ in its detail but should have some similarity in identifying varying degrees of risk severity and corresponding actions):

* Severe Risk

Severity—heavy accumulations on all elevated surfaces over a wide area in a single normally occupied compartment

Consequence—imminent risk of a damaging explosion

Action—immediate shut down and clean up; all machinery must be de-energized and shut down during clean up

High Risk

Severity—significant accumulations over a wide area in a single compartment

Consequence—risk of a localized event involving combustion of dust and under accumulated unfavourable conditions, could give risk to a wider event

Action—must be attended to immediately; all machinery must be de-energized and shut down during clean up

Moderate Risk

Severity—lesser accumulations of dust in isolated areas that are not extensive; this category may apply to compartments where the accumulation of dust layers is lower or to localized areas with higher accumulations

Consequence—risk of a localized event involving combustion of dust and under accumulated unfavourable conditions, could give risk to a wider event; lower than the previous categories of “High” and “Severe”

Action—should be attended to in the short to intermediate terms (up to 1 week) with a view to eliminating or controlling the risk on an ongoing basis

Low Risk

Severity—tolerable accumulations of dust on elevated horizontal surfaces (or vertical walls); other factors including accumulation of coarser material

Consequence—potential risk of a localized event involving combustion of dust but would require accumulated unfavourable conditions

Action—this category can be managed using normal (current) control measures; if there are Low accumulations over wide areas or in numerous instances throughout, it may be appropriate to elevate the rating to Moderate with corresponding action

No Risk

Severity—no significant accumulations of fine dust.

Consequence—this category recognizes that very coarse sawdust accumulated at floor level does not represent an explosion hazard.

Action—no specific or special actions required, normal (current) control measures satisfactory

The Auditor must verify that the risks associated with combustible wood dust hazards in the Facility have been correctly identified. This must be done through inspection of the Facility.

2. Training and Orientation

The Auditor must determine if the training being provided is adequate for the hazards and risks associated with combustible wood dust in the Facility.

The indoctrination, education and training programs should include information on (FIPI training and education package):

Characteristics of combustible dust

Identification of combustible dust hazards

Methods of control for combustible dust

Identification and control of ignition sources

Firefighting controls

Emergency response procedures

The Auditor should evaluate the indoctrination, education and training programs through review of training materials, safe work procedures and training records. The Auditor should consider the following:

The Facility should integrated combustible wood dust awareness and training into the safe work procedures

The Facility should conduct a training needs analysis to determine what employees require specific training pertaining to combustible wood dust in the workplace and on specific jobs/tasks. Including periodic refresher training for employees and contractors.

Employees should be knowledgeable of their responsibilities pertaining to combustible wood dust in the workplace (this can be confirmed through interviews of employees identified in the training needs analysis)

Contractors should be subject to indoctrination and training with a specific focus on the hazards of combustible dust

The auditor must confirm that contractors are provided with appropriate training, education and orientation programs as well. If possible, this should be confirmed by interviewing a sample of trades people and other contractors.

To be in conformance with this question the Auditor must confirm the above criteria is met in all areas where hazard controls have been implemented.

3. Auditing Internal/External

The Facility should ideally have an internal auditing program in place or else utilize an external auditor to identify potential dust hazards and mitigation options.

The facility should have an annual internal wood dust mitigation and control audit or evaluation process in place

Internal auditors if in place should be educated and trained on wood dust mitigation and control. External auditors if used should be fully educated and trained on the hazards and mitigation controls related to combustible dust

Defined standards and protocols should be used by either internal or external auditors

The facility should engage the services of a 3rd party auditor to complete a formal Wood Dust Evaluation once every 3 years

Any non-conformance items identified from previous 3rd party audits should be corrected in a timely manner

Results of the audits (internal or external) should be communicated to management and employees

4. Fire Safety Plan

The Auditor should confirm that the Facility has reviewed and updated its Fire Safety Plan to include changes that may be required to accommodate hazards associated with combustible wood dust. For example, have muster station locations been reviewed in terms of proximity to buildings where a combustible dust explosion could occur? Another example may be use of explosion proof emergency lighting and exit signs in buildings where a combustible dust explosion could occur.

The following points should be considered to facilitate documentation of the Fire Safety Plan:

An education and training program should be provided for the use of fire suppression equipment such as fire extinguishers and hoses

Local authorities (emergency response personnel) should be aware of emergency response plans

Pre-incident planning inspections by emergency response personnel should be conducted in conjunction with plant management with a focus on hazardous areas

Employees should be given emergency response training appropriate for their individual (and collective) responsibilities

Emergency procedures for fire and evacuation should be tested and evaluated on an annual basis

Site emergency evacuation procedures are posted and current

An effective means to communicate an emergency situation throughout the facility should be in place

Intercom

Sirens or alarms

Other

Employees must be knowledgeable about the Fire Safety Plan

An individual(s) shall be designated with responsibility for the above program

5. Management of Change

A management of change process should exist at the facility. The Auditor must review the Facility change management process to confirm that combustible wood dust hazard is considered when evaluating the impact of change.

The following points should be considered for the management of change program;

* Management of Change process should exist to address changes in equipment, process, species/feedstock, shifting, line speeds, saws/knives, ventilation systems, etc.

Combustible wood dust hazard is addressed in the management of change program.

A process should be in place to re-evaluate the hazard when an equipment or process change occurs. The process should include identification, communication and management of change in the facility.

A risk and hazard assessment should be completed for hazards associated with combustible wood dust that may result from the change.

Action plans should be developed to address any identified concerns.

A follow-up process should be in place to ensure that actions are completed and appropriate controls are implemented.

Relevant policies, work procedure, etc. should be updated to reflect the change.

Upset conditions such as temporarily disabled ventilation systems etc. should be identified as part of the management of change process.

An appropriate action plan such as increased housekeeping or equipment isolation should be completed until conditions return to normal.

Best practice is to have facility change management programs, process, and outcomes documented.

6. Hazard Assessment

Identification of Dust

The Facility should be able to produce a document that provides indication on what areas of the Facility have been included in the assessment and that identifies where hazardous combustible wood dust accumulations can exist. All areas of the facility should be inspected to identify areas where combustible dust can accumulate. This inspection should include concealed spaces such as attics, false ceilings, crawl spaces, etc.

As part of the inspection process an effective method to measure the rate of dust accumulation in the various areas of the facility to ensure that is does not exceed the industry standard.

Note: The industry standard has determined a hazardous combustible wood dust condition exists where accumulations of greater than 1/8th inch exist on elevated surfaces over 5% of the area of the building/compartment. Consideration should be given to potential for deflagration propagation as impacted by physical building or process compartmentalization.

The Auditor must verify the elements of the hazard assessment process. To verify, the Auditor should review the hazard assessment documentation.

A hazard assessment process should include:

Identification of all areas where combustible wood dust can accumulate in the Facility including concealed spaces

Identification of potential ignition sources

Identification of combustible wood dust properties through laboratory testing

Categorization of risk

Mitigation and control strategies

Follow up

Management of change process

Some facilities may choose to determine the combustibility of the wood dust in their facility through laboratory testing. Laboratory testing is not a substitute for good housekeeping practices, but testing can determine the explosivity and subsequent hazard of the dust produced by the facility.

Testing should be completed periodically (i.e., quarterly) to determine if the properties have changed due to atmospheric conditions or the feedstock being processed. Testing should include samples throughout the facility including dust accumulations on elevated surfaces.

* All wood dust should be assumed to be potentially hazardous and explosible. Laboratory testing and scientific evaluation with regular monitoring and re-testing is a valuable tool to minimize and manage the risk. Typical laboratory testing includes the following;
  + Moisture content
  + Mean / median particle size and distribution
  + Explosion Severity (Pmax & Kst)
  + Ignition Sensitivity (MIE, MIT & MEC)

Identification of Ignition Sources

Potential ignition sources throughout the facility should be identified and where possible, removed or isolated. As part of the hazard and risk identification, the facility should be able to produce a document that identifies where potential ignition sources exist. Ignition sources include but are not limited to:

Hot work

Hot surfaces

Open flame or fuel-fired heating equipment

Friction points

Machine and processing equipment

Electrical systems

Static electricity

Smoking

Lightning

Tramp Metal/Foreign material

Facility Lighting

For each ignition source, the Auditor must evaluate whether appropriate controls were put in place to eliminate the ignition source. Examples for some ignition sources include the following:

Hot Work

Hot Work has been identified as a potential ignition source and all hot work activities should be strictly controlled and monitored.

Wood working facilities should have a documented hot work policy and procedure in place and should utilize hot work permits.

The hot work policy should contain standard industry requirements such as wet downs/clean-up of combustibles, dedicated spark watcher, monitoring of area for 4 hours, etc.

Hot Surfaces

Hot surfaces have been identified as a potential ignition source. Hot surfaces with temperature exceeding approximately 200ºC (ignition of wood flour in a layer is approximately 260ºC) should be identified throughout the facility. These hot surfaces should be removed, shielded/isolated or encapsulated wherever possible.

Radiant type heaters should be shielded from dust accumulation. The hot surfaces should be allowed to cool down before any dust blow downs are conducted.

Permanently installed, forced air type heating equipment (including electrical forced air heaters) should be located in areas free from dust accumulation. The heaters should be periodically inspected to ensure they are free from dust accumulation. The hot surfaces should be allowed to cool down before any dust blow downs are conducted.

Hot surfaces such as steam/thermal oil pipes should be insulated and encapsulated with a non-combustible covering (i.e.; metal).

Cooling systems for planers, saws etc. should be interlocked to stop operation and alert the operator to prevent the machinery from overheating and becoming a potential ignition source.

Heating Equipment (Temporary)

Temporary, construction type heaters (salamanders, torpedo heaters, etc.) have been identified as a potential ignition source

Use of these heaters should be prohibited unless used for temporary emergency heating only.

If/when used appropriate safety precautions are taken including clear spacing from combustibles, protection of fuel line integrity, regular inspection of heater while operating etc.

Combustion controls, fuel lines and gas train should be inspected and tested annually for permanent or temporary fuel fired (natural gas, propane, fuel oil etc.) appliances.

Friction

Friction points have been identified (open belts, conveyor spools, nip points) as a potential ignition source

Friction points should be identified, monitored and cleaned on a regular basis to prevent friction based fires from occurring.

Machine and Processing Equipment

Machine centres and processing equipment have been identified as potential ignition sources.

The machinery and equipment should be inspected and maintained to prevent overheated bearings, hot motors, spark from equipment etc.

Open drip proof type motors should be inspected on a regular basis for dust accumulation inside the motor and cleaned as required. As an alternative, ‘totally enclosed, fan cooled motors’ should be investigated as these motors do not permit the ingress of dust into the motor.

Electrical Systems

Electrical equipment has been identified as a potential ignition source.

Electrical equipment should be properly isolated (enclosed room) or designed for use in a dusty environment where required (i.e., chipper rooms, hammer mill rooms or other areas where dust is typically in suspension during normal operation). Electrical equipment designed for use in a dusty environment is typically *Hazardous Classification Group II, Division 2, Group G* in these specific areas.

Thermographic/IR surveys on the electrical distribution equipment should be performed annually with any anomalies repaired.

Regular inspection and cleaning of MCC cabinets should be performed.

If an electrical ignition hazard is identified, all electrical equipment including lighting should be de-energized prior to completing any blow downs or wash downs in the immediate vicinity.

In areas where dust blow down is being conducted, the electrical equipment in the area of dust removal should either by dust tight or fully cleaned prior to re-energizing.

Smoking

Uncontrolled smoking has been identified as a potential ignition source.

Smoking should be strictly prohibited within any building used for the processing or storage of wood products. Smoking should also be prohibited within mobile equipment used on the property.

Designated smoking areas should be provided. Ideally these areas should be located away from any major building and should be free from combustibles in the immediate area.

Appropriate containers should be provided for the safe disposal of cigarette butts.

Lightning

Lightning has been identified as a potential ignition source.

Dedicated lightning rods should be provided in areas subject to electrical storms.

Alternatively, lightning arrestors should be provided for high voltage gear.

Static Electricity

Static electricity has been identified as a potential ignition source. When combustible dusts or other materials pass through a duct, static charges on the duct are generated. If a charge is allowed to accumulate on an electrically insulated portion of a duct system it could discharge and ignite the material being conveyed. For this reason, exhaust systems and their associated equipment should be electrically bonded and grounded.

Appropriate grounding should be provided for all equipment cable of generating a static charge.

Appropriate bonding and grounding should be provided on all pneumatic duct work that conveys combustible dust.

Flexible rubber or plastic type ducting that can accumulate a static charge should be bonded and grounded.

A program should be in place for the inspection and continuity testing of the bonding and grounding in the facility. This inspection and testing should be completed on an annual basis.

Tramp Metal/Foreign Contamination

Tramp metal and foreign contamination within processes that cut, shape or pulverize wood have been identified as potential ignition sources. Tramp metal/foreign contamination within pneumatic conveyance systems has also been identified as a potential ignition source.

Metal detection, magnetic separation or air density separation should be provided prior to fractionating equipment.

Floor level suction systems (floor sweeps) should be eliminated wherever possible or else equipped with magnets to capture tramp metal

Facility Lighting

Lighting has been identified as a potential ignition source. Wood processing facilities typically have HID (high intensity discharge) lighting in use. This type of lighting operates at high temperatures and can be a potential ignition source. Metal halide type HID lighting has replaced most mercury vapour lighting due to greater efficiency and the environmental concerns of mercury. High pressure sodium HID lighting can also be in use, but this type of lighting is not as common for interior use as metal halide lighting due to the colour spectrum. Halogen and incandescent type of lighting can also be found in use.

Exposed light bulbs regardless of type should be adequately protected or shielded with covers to prevent dust from coming into contact with the hot surface of the lamp.

“Dust tight” type light fixtures should be utilized in dusty enclosures such as chipper or screener rooms or other areas where dust can be found in constant suspension.

If metal halide type lighting is used with open fixtures not having a containment barrier, double walled, type O lamps should be used. Type E (enclosed fixture required) bulbs are to be used only where the lamp is provided with a suitably rated enclosed fixture. Metal halide lights operate with a high internal pressure and there is the potential for an arc tube rupture which may eject hot particles from the lamp unless either enclosed fixtures or appropriately rated (type O) lamps are used.

HID lamps should only be operated in its designated operating position.

HID lamps should only be operated with the compatible ballast, rated fixture (open/closed, wattage) and socket.

Metal halide lamps should be turned off (cycled) for a minimum of 15 minutes per week to reduce the possibility of arc tube rupture in continuously operating installation.

Halogen lamps should be used only in halogen approved fixtures. Fixtures should fully contain any parts of the lamp in the event of a lamp burst.

The heat levels of the light and the ballast must be considered for installations in all locations, and systems must be in place to ensure that they are kept free for dust build-up

7. Wood Dust Hazard Mitigation and Control

The auditor must identify what the Facility has implemented to control the combustible wood dust hazard.

Controls may include but are not limited to the following:

Housekeeping

Passive containment

Construction features

Misting

Engineered ventilation systems including cyclones and baghouses

Ignition source management

Deflagration management

For all areas subjected to the hazard assessment, the Auditor must evaluate whether the controls are appropriate.

Control—Housekeeping

The facility should ensure that housekeeping is performed on a regular basis to prevent dust accumulations from exceeding 1/8 inch thick over 1,000 sq. ft. or as specified through analysis of dust explosiveness for the location, whichever is less. Regular cleaning frequencies should be established for walls, floor and horizontal surfaces of equipment, ducts, pipes, hoods, beams, ledges, suspended ceilings, etc.

Dust accumulations should be minimized on elevated, horizontal surfaces. The use of compressed air for clean up purposes should be discouraged and minimized as it can place the dust into suspension and increase the potential for a deflagration if an ignition source is present. Preferred methods are sweeping, vacuuming or water wash down. If blow downs are required, an air/water wand type system should be utilized. WorkSafe BC limits the use of compressed air to a maximum of 15 psi unless a hazard and risk assessment has been performed.

If vacuuming is used, the unit should be properly designed and rated for the exposure (Class II, Division 1). Vigorous sweeping should be avoided to prevent a dust cloud from forming during clean-up activities. Caution should be exercised around electrical appliances if water is used for clean-up.

Spaces inaccessible to housekeeping shall be sealed to prevent accumulations.

The following checklist is provided to facilitate documentation of housekeeping practices:

The Facility has an established housekeeping standard

Workers and supervisors trained in this standard

Dedicated cleanup crews are provided

Dust accumulations are minimized on elevated, horizontal surfaces and are kept below 1/8 inch thick over 5% of the compartment area

Regular cleaning frequencies are established

Walls

Floors

Horizontal surfaces of equipment

Ducts

Pipes

Hoods

Beams

Ledges

Suspended ceilings

Other

Spaces inaccessible to housekeeping are sealed to prevent accumulations

Housekeeping logs are maintained

There are written safe work procedures for clean-up and the use of compressed air

Methods other than compressed air blow down are employed for housekeeping

Brooms

Air/water wands

Other

The Auditor, through review of safe work procedures or other relevant documents that instruct, or direct employees, and through employee interviews and facility inspections confirm if the method and frequency of housekeeping efforts is sufficient to ensure combustible wood dust accumulations on elevated surfaces do not exceed 1/8” over 5% of the compartment area.

Control—Passive Containment

Machinery and equipment used to cut, shape, pulverize, chip or transfer wood fibre has the ability to generate large quantities of dust throughout the process. The points listed below are industry recognized standards for minimizing dust accumulation at commonly found machinery and equipment in woodworking facilities.

Debarkers, Canters, Edgers Trimmers Best Practices

Debarkers, canters and edgers are the primary and secondary break down machines used in sawmills and can generate large quantities of coarse sawdust, wood debris and shavings. If not properly managed, the sawdust can dry out over time, become airborne and settle on elevated surfaces throughout the facility. The risk of a fire in these areas is considered low—moderate, however due to the volume of sawdust and debris created by these machines, dust mitigation practices should be in place.

Machine centers that produce debris require chuting and drop outs to conveyors so as not to collect debris, particles or combustible dust on or beside the machine center.

Consider location of drop-outs, grizzlies, etc. to adequately capture debris at the machine center and also any carry over that may be carried forward on belts or the boards after the machine center.

Consider shielding the machine center to contain debris so that it falls into the appropriate system, this may include strategies such as curtains, or steel sheeting to prevent sawdust and debris from spraying from knives and saws.

Divert debris away from potential ignition sources such as high speed bearings and electrical motors.

Consider shears and other passive strategies to divert material streams to drop outs or vacuum systems.

Where possible consider solid flooring rather than grating after machine centers that tend to carry sawdust on boards (such as trimmers) to avoid depositing material into uncontrolled areas such as basements where fine dust is separated and can potentially collect on cable trays, beams, pipes heaters, etc.

Also consider scraper conveyors to periodically clean debris.

Install misters above machine centers that produce airborne dust that cannot be contained by other methods.

Completely sealed machine centers will require misting and or an extraction system if the potential for creating a deflagration hazard in the confined space exists.

Isolate machine centers where possible using curtains or other type of enclosures to keep dust from drifting into other areas.

Control material spillage and uncontrolled dust plumes in the basement level that is caused by falling debris from the operating floor.

Planer Best Practices

Planer machines can produce fine dust as well as shavings. Most fine dust will be generated at the pineapple rolls and the planer rolls. Due to the friction created through the planer either by the rolls or by debris caught in rolls the risk of fire in this location is high.

Bed plates and line bars require a cooling system that is maintained and continuously circulates coolants into areas. Maintenance of these systems requires checks and procedures to ensure that ports are free of obstructions, pumps are operating within parameters and that these systems are purged and maintained according to the manufacturer specifications.

Planer line ups that ensure line bars and bed plates are level and true will ensure that friction points are not created.

The planer has many high speed bearings, a thermal scan performed periodically will assist in determining a potential bearing failure.

Real time vibration monitoring systems or thermal sensing devices at the planer are recommended to prevent or avoid ignition or the spread of fire.

Pineapple rolls require dust extraction systems or misting system to prevent the distribution of airborne dust.

Dropouts and a conveyor system under the planer and Planer Bridge is recommended to remove debris from the planer area.

Planer machine should be isolated in a room to avoid the spreading dust to other areas of the mill.

Chippers and Chip Screens Best Practices

Due to the action of Chippers and Chip screens there is a high potential to segregate fine particles of dust.:

Where possible isolate these devices in separate rooms that are appropriately vented and sealed. Sealed motors should be used. Since these areas have a high risk potential for fine dust appropriate maintenance and cleaning activities are required to ensure that combustible dust is managed within limits.

***Mitigation Alternative***: Where it is not possible to isolate these areas misting to control air borne dust, curtain and or sealing around points creating dust can be used.

Vibrating Conveyors Best Practices

Vibrating conveyors have a high potential to efficiently separate fine dust from other materials.

Dust extraction systems designed to extract finer particles should be incorporated in the design of the conveyor to avoid carrying fine dust downstream. Fines should be removed prior to entry into the chipper.

Adequate pans at the head and tail ends, as well as passive containment (skirting) where applicable at the sides to avoid having separated materials exit the system.

Misting systems should be considered but may have an opposing impact in preventing dust from being conveyed and potentially fowling the springs and other mechanical components.

Belt and Chain Conveyors Best Practices

Ensure conveyor pans are sufficiently sized to contain all materials. Holes, transition, etc. should be “leak free”.

Consider slides at transition points to guide material into conveyors rather than having large drops which can cause dust plumes. Likewise consider slower speeds adequate to move the material rather than “flinging” material off the end of head spools and drums.

Enclosed conveyors that have a potential for high dust concentration will need to have a dust collection system or mister installed to prevent the potential for deflagration. These conveyors are typically found at the discharge end of chippers.

Belt conveyors often build up static electrical charges which will cause fine dust to stick to the belt. Fine dust will then be deposited at the support rollers. Belt scrapers can be used to clean the belt at strategic locations to avoid the build up of dust in non desirable areas.

Decks and Deck Chains Best Practices

Lumber decks will often collect sawdust from boards transferred onto the decks. Where possible it is most desirable to minimize or eliminate dust from falling on lumber deck utilizing drop outs prior to the landing areas.

Decks must be well maintained and sealed so that loose material does not fall into an uncontrolled area underneath the decks on beams, lights, MCC’s, etc.

***Mitigation Alternative***: Alternatively decks can have openings in strategic locations where the material can be collected and conveyed to a dust extraction system or other waste system.

Consider the location of decks and the location of head and tail sprockets as these areas typically drag material underneath the deck. Preferably there will be an extraction area underneath or chuting to direct material into a waste conveyor.

***Mitigation Alternative***: In the absence of a conveyor, chuting to a waste bin or a controlled area away from ignition sources may be used.

Control—Construction Features

The use of proper construction is crucial to prevention and mitigation of loss from fire and explosion in wood handling facilities where a dust hazard exists. Use of proper materials and construction features can reduce dust and debris accumulations, simplify and complement good housekeeping practices, and limit communication and damage should an event occur.

Where a dust hazard exists, new buildings should be constructed of non-combustible or FM approved Class I materials with fire walls, structural elements, walls, arches, floors, and roofs are of approved non-combustible or limited-combustible materials. Alternately, roof structures utilizing glue laminated beams/heavy timber type construction should also be investigated as this type of construction eliminates “pockets” along the ceiling structure inside the I-beams and purlins where dust can accumulate.

Construction should prevent fire or explosion from propagating into or from adjacent compartments and should utilize passive fire protection features (separation, fire walls, and partitions, draft curtains) to accomplish this. Rooms or buildings should also be provided with deflagration venting to safe outside location.

Interior surfaces should be designed to facilitate cleaning. Walls should be smooth to prevent dust adherence and should have no ledges. The use of wall materials that allow dust to adhere to it (i.e., cellulose or cementitious type fireproofing, peg board, donnacona board, etc.) should be avoided. Structural steel that has horizontal surfaces (I-beams, U-shaped channel upwards facing or sideways facing) should be boxed in. Windows, ledges, girders, beams and other horizontal surfaces including light fixtures should have tops sharply sloped (45—60 degrees) to minimize dust deposit.

Existing buildings that are primarily combustible construction should ensure that upward facing horizontal members are minimized. Where present, areas such as open wood truss roof structures or open wood stud walls should have the open areas enclosed with a material offering a level of fire resistance such as plywood, type X drywall or sheet metal. If enclosing an area, it is important to fully seal the cavity to prevent wood dust from entering.

The Auditor should verify whether building design features have been utilized/incorporated to complement housekeeping and reduce dust accumulations.

Control—Misting

Water misting systems can be effectively utilized to assist with dust control, but should not be used as a substitution for good housekeeping practices.

Water misting systems can be utilized inside or above machine centres where dust is produced due to the action of saws, knives or other cutting/shaping or pulverizing devices.

Stand alone blower type misting systems are also available which can cover wide areas of the facility such as above debarkers or canter machines.

When considering water misting systems, the area should be analyzed to ensure the system will not create an opposing impact in preventing dust from being conveyed and potentially caking and fowling other areas and mechanical components with wet dust.

The following checklist is provided to facilitate documentation of misting system implementation:

Water misting systems are utilized to help contain dust around machine centres

There is no evidence of an opposing impact from use of the system

The system can be used in winter months without concern for cold weather damage

The Auditor should verify whether misting controls are in use as well as their effectiveness at controlling dust accumulations. The Auditor should also evaluate whether the systems are viable for use during winter months and should recommend the Facility consider alternatives if systems are deemed inoperable during cold weather.

Control—Engineered Ventilation Systems

Dust collection systems are a key element to reducing or eliminating the dust hazard within the building. In some cases, additional systems or more collection points may need to be added to mitigate the dust hazard on a more permanent basis. Where installed, collectors and cyclones should ideally be located outside or as a minimum, explosion venting provided to the outside, with isolation devices provided where potential for re-entry to building is a concern.

Where needed, dust collection equipment should be of sufficient size and capacity to maintain the required airflow and efficiently separate the wood dust from the air before the air is exhausted. It should be constructed entirely of non-combustible materials. The dust collection equipment should be designed by an engineer or qualified contractor acceptable to the authority having jurisdiction. If the auditor cannot verify the details of the specification and design, an independent inspection should be requested by a qualified third party.

Dust collection systems require periodic inspection and maintenance to ensure the units operated as designed. Due to the hazards of pneumatically conveying wood dust, protective equipment such as spark detection and suppression systems are often in place for larger systems, in particular baghouses. A documented self-testing and inspection procedure should be in place for any protective equipment on a baghouse or cyclone ventilation system. Wood dust and resin can obscure detector eyes and spray nozzles. Wood debris can clog abort gates and back draft dampers. These conditions can affect the operation and reliability of the systems.

This section has been broken down to include general information for both baghouses (pressurized sock type collectors) and cyclones due to the significant difference in the hazard presented.

The following points should be considered when inspecting the dust collection/ventilation system:

General Requirements for Dust Collection Systems

Electrical Interlocks: Equipment required to have a dust-collecting system shall be interlocked to prevent it from operating if the dust-collecting system is not in operation.(BC Fire Code [2012] 5.3.1.8.)

The system should be designed and/or reviewed by a qualified contractor or engineer. Documentation should be available for review to support this.

No changes to the dust collection system equipment, design and installation should be made until approved by a qualified individual able to determine the adequacy of the system. This should be complemented by engineering plan reviews from underwriters/risk consulting firms (where applicable/available).

Ideally, separate dust-collection systems for each process area should be used to minimize the chance of one dust explosion involving many operations.

Dust collectors with a deflagration hazard should be designed and constructed in accordance with one (or more) of the following options:

Constructed of welded steel or other non-combustible material of sufficient strength to withstand the maximum unvented deflagration pressure of the material being collected.

Protected by a deflagration suppression system, with a design strength exceeding the maximum reduced deflagration pressure of the material being collected.

Equipped with deflagration relief vents, with a design strength exceeding the maximum reduced deflagration pressure of the material being collected.

Ducts should be constructed of metal or other non-combustible material, and of adequate strength and rigidity to meet service conditions and installation requirements.

Changes in duct sizes should be designed to prevent the accumulation of material by utilizing a tapered transformation piece with the included angle of the taper not more than 30 degrees.

A preventative maintenance program should be in place to periodically inspect dust collection systems and their associated duct work (recommended annually or as required) to ensure that they are free from obstructions.

Locate dust collection and transfer equipment outside, away from important buildings and utilities. *Note: see section under cyclones regarding indoor installation as per NFPA 664*

Separate dust collection systems should be in place for non compatible equipment such as exhaust systems for the welding or filing shop to ensure sparks are not collected by a system conveying wood dust.

All dust collection equipment including the pneumatic duct work should be bonded and grounded. Pressurized baghouses (sock type collectors) should have the cages and bags grounded and bonded in addition to the unit and duct work. The bonding and grounding should be inspected and tested for continuity on an annual basis.

The explosion and suppression system of dust extraction systems should be tested (operational test) and calibrated on a regular basis, to ensure the system operates within designed parameters. Changes to such parameters should only be made following the Management of change (MOC) process.  
***Note: operational parameters can/will be affected if modifications are made to the dust extraction system without proper engineering work***

Cyclones

Cyclones vent wood fines/dust through the top of the unit and should be vented to the exterior of the building to prevent wood dust accumulation inside of the building. The explosion potential is not considered as high with a cyclone due to the open venting at the top of the unit, however if the vent pipe is connected to other equipment such as blower fans (pull through design) or a baghouse, explosion venting should be provided.

Ideally cyclones located outside of any building. NFPA 664 permits the installation of cyclones indoors under the following conditions:

1. If there is no deflagration or fire hazard

2. If the unit is equipped with a deflagration suppression system

3. If the unit is equipped with relief vents that extend to safe areas outside the building and meets collector strength requirements

4. If the unit is equipped with deflagration relief vents exhausting through listed flame quenching devices and meets collector strength requirements

Cyclones should be located outside unless the installation satisfies points 1-4 above.

Baghouses

Pressurized Baghouses (sock type collectors with enclosures) present a significantly increased deflagration hazard due to the pressurized enclosure containing combustible dust in suspension. A documented self testing and inspection procedure should be in place for any protective equipment on a baghouse or cyclone ventilation system. Wood dust and resin can obscure detector eyes and spray nozzles. Wood debris can clog abort gates and back draft dampers. These conditions can affect the operation and reliability of the systems.

A review of the sequential shut down of dust collecting equipment is required. If all possible, air flow should be maintained, to prevent a possible dust explosion.  
**Note:** ***When the automatic bag-cleaning feature operates, it produces a dust cloud within the collector and this dust cloud is ignited by the pre-existing fire. Consequently, once a fire has become established within the dust collector, the airflow should not be shut down as that causes accumulated dust to slough off the bags, producing a dust cloud that can deflagrate. Instead, the airflow should be maintained. This limits the rate at which dust can slough off of the bags and minimizes the probability that a large dust cloud and resulting deflagration will occur. The flow of air through the dust collector also removes heat from the dust collector (NFPA 664).***

Protective Equipment

Sprinkler protection (manual or automatic) should be provided within the baghouse enclosure. Protection should either consist of a dry pipe type system with fusible link heads or else a ‘quick connect’ type system with open heads. If a quick connect system is provided, the baghouse should be equipped with a heat detector inside the unit to notify employees of a potential emergency situation.

Baghouses connected to known spark producing equipment such as high speed sanders, planers, chippers, etc. should be provided with an approved and listed spark detection and suppression system.

To further protect the baghouse, a high speed abort gate should be provided as a secondary protection zone after the spark detection/suppression system and prior to the baghouse. Baghouses which return filtered air back inside of any building should be equipped with a high speed abort gate (or similar effective device) to diver the force of an explosion and any burning material away from the building.

Deflagration Venting/Isolation Devices

Deflagration/explosion venting is required on the baghouse in order to vent the force of an explosion. The venting system should be designed by a qualified engineer with supporting documentation available for review.

Explosion venting should be constructed of material that is as light in weight as possible to minimize the vent area required.

The venting should be shielded or directed away from buildings (or other items subject to fire or pressure damage) and areas where personnel congregate. The venting area should be clearly marked or fenced to alert personnel to the potential hazard.

Clear space should be maintained on both sides of a vent to enable operation without restriction and without impeding a free flow through the vent. A distance of at least two explosion vent diameters between an explosion vent outlet and any large, fixed, flat obstruction (i.e., shielding) should be provided.

Rupture disks and blast panels should be provided with safety chains or cables, physical shielding (see point above regarding spacing) or similar to prevent the panels discharging from the unit and becoming potential projectiles in the event of an explosion.

Where explosion venting devices swing out of the way rather than rupture, use gravity or mechanical devices (i.e.; latches, springs etc.) to ensure they cannot re-close and create vacuum conditions that can collapse/implode the protected equipment.

The vent opening should be free and clear. Vent closure operation should not be hindered by deposits of snow, ice, paint, corrosion, or debris, or by the build-up of deposits on their inside surfaces.

A rotary air lock should be provided on the baghouse to prevent the communication of burning material to other areas of the process.

Physical isolation protection (i.e., counter-weighted back draft damper or fire damper) should be provided on the infeed duct leading to the baghouse.

When ducts pass through a physical barrier that is erected to segregate dust deflagration hazards, physical isolation protection should be provided to prevent propagation of deflagrations between segregated spaces.

Preventative Maintenance

A preventative maintenance/self inspection program should be in place with supporting documentation. The program should include the frequency of inspection for the baghouse structure, the bags and the grounding of the unit.

The baghouse unit and associated equipment should be inspected as per the manufacturers’ guidelines or annually at minimum.

A preventative maintenance program should be in place for the regular (as recommended by the manufacturer) self-testing, inspection and cleaning of both the spark detection eyes and suppression nozzles if applicable.

A preventative maintenance program should be in place for the regular (i.e., semi-annual) inspection and testing of components such as high speed abort gates and back draft dampers.

The baghouse unit, including the bags, cages and ducting should be grounded. Grounding straps should be inspected and maintained.

The baghouse unit and associated equipment should be inspected as per the manufactures guidelines, or annually at minimum.

Storage Silos and Bucket Elevators

Sawdust, shavings and wood fines collected by the dust collection systems are often stored in silos for use as fuel for other parts of the process (i.e., wood fired thermal oil or hot water systems). The material is often conveyed into the silos using bucket elevators.

Storage silos used to store dry saw dust or planer shavings have the potential for a deflagration if an ignition source is introduced. In addition the silos have the ability to accumulate a static charge as the material is being moved into or out of the silo. Deflagration venting and grounding should be provided for the silo unit.

Bucket elevators are often used to transfer material into storage silos. Bucket elevators can create potential ignition sources due to belt or bucket misalignment or belt slippage. Alignment and rotation monitors and interlocks should be provided in addition to properly designed explosion venting.

Silos and bucket elevators should be equipped with properly designed and engineer deflagration/explosion venting.

Grounding should be provided for storage silos and bucket elevators.

Automatic sprinkler protection or a dry type deluge system with a ‘quick connection’ should be provided for the storage silo.

Heat detection devices (spot type or rate of rise) should be provided within the silo unit to detect any significant increases in temperature.

Bucket elevators should be equipped with belt slippage/rotation monitors and belt alignment monitors. These monitors should be interlocked to stop operation of the unit and notify the operator.

Enclosureless Dust Collectors

Some risks from traditional explosions are reduced with compliant EDCs since creation of projectiles would be limited given the fabric filter bags used in construction.  Yet, deflagration and flash fires risks remain.  
NFPA 664 and NFPA 654 allow indoor use of the EDCs, subject to specific requirements:

EDC’s should only be used to collect/pick up material resulting from wood processing machinery (i.e., no metal grinders), however, EDC’s are prohibited to be used on sanders, planers, etc or any equipment having material mechanically fed through the machine.

The size of the collector is limited to a max of 5000cfm (2,4m3/sec)

Minimum space separation requirements are in place. A min of 20 ft. (6.1m) of clear space is required to be provided between EDC’s or any areas normally occupied by personnel

A comprehensive cleaning, inspection and maintenance program should be provided

Active fire suppression system should be provided: local sprinkler systems located immediately above the unit or spark/fire detection and suppression systems in the main duct, upstream of the unit.

Control—Preventative Maintenance

Electrical System Preventative Maintenance

All electrical equipment should ideally be located inside dedicated rooms provided with slightly positive air pressure and a constant, relatively cool temperature. All electrical room doors and the cabinets inside these rooms should be tightly closed. There should be no combustible materials anywhere inside these rooms. This will help ensure that this equipment operates as designed and separates a potential ignition source from combustible wood debris.

In situations where a separate room cannot be provided, sufficient housekeeping must be conducted so that all electrical equipment is free of both coarse and fine wood dust accumulations. This includes areas on top of electrical cabinets, inside the cabinets, and on the floor next to the cabinets.

Switchgear and other electrical equipment should undergo regular, quick visual inspections. These inspections should be performed with the switchgear energized and in its normal operating condition. Switchgear should be found operating in a clean, cool, dry and tight environment with no abnormal noises, smells, vibration or heat. All electrical cabinet/room doors should be tightly closed. Areas found with unacceptable levels of dust accumulations should be cleaned right away using a method that is appropriate for the area and hazard. Vacuuming is the preferred choice for cleaning inside electrical enclosures. Electrical equipment should be locked-out and de-energized before cleaning.

The following points should be considered for the electrical system preventative maintenance;

Electrical equipment should be properly maintained and inspected regularly to ensure the components do not fail unexpectedly and create an ignition source.

Infrared scanning should be conducted on the electrical distribution system on an annual basis. The scanning should be performed by either an external contractor or an employee who have been certified to Level I. Level I certification is the first of three levels of infrared training the ITC offers. Level I infrared thermographers are typically new to infrared thermographic diagnostics. That does not imply that they are entry-level condition monitoring technicians, indeed many Level I professionals have years of experience in building and maintaining complex systems. Level I thermographers generally follow a written test procedure to evaluate specific types of equipment in their facility. They can operate their infrared cameras and software and identify and measure thermal anomalies based on thermal patterns, comparisons with similar equipment, and their own experience.

“Hot spots” identified during infrared scanning should be repaired. Critical or Serious faults should be repaired promptly.

Repairs are documented with a follow up scan performed to ensure the “hot spot” has been eliminated.

A schedule should be in place for electrical room enclosure inspection and cleaning.

All temporary wiring and use of portable electrical equipment (i.e., radios, fans and heaters) should be eliminated wherever possible.

Ideally MCC cabinets and other electrical distribution equipment should be located in dedicated enclosures, particularly in hazardous areas. The rooms should be provided with positive air pressure drawn from a clean air source. The rooms should be inspected and cleaned on a regular basis to ensure there is no dust ingress into the room and that the room remains free of combustible storage.

Dedicated electrical rooms should meet the requirements of the BC Building Code for service room construction. All penetrations/openings should be sealed with a fire-rated stopping compound. The electrical safety regulation requires an electrical equipment vault when that room contains oil-filled electrical equipment (refer to CDN Electrical Code Part 1). Electrical equipment vaults must have a 3 hour fire rating unless the room has automatic sprinkler protection, which reduces the requirement to a 2 hour rating. Other service rooms containing electrical equipment require a 1 hour fire rating (refer to the BC Building Code for specifics)

A schedule should be in place for MCC panel inspection and cleaning; prioritization is based on evaluation of accumulation rates. Electrical wiring, fittings and other devices should be properly sealed. Open MCC cabinets should be visually inspected on a regular basis to ensure the cabinet doors and access covers for energized equipment are closed and secured with all fasteners in place.

The electrical switch gear and distribution breakers should be calibrated and load tested (i.e.; megger testing) every 3 – 5 years by a qualified contractor.

Mechanical Systems Preventative Maintenance

A preventative maintenance program can vary from a highly complex computerized system that generates and tracks work orders to a paper based system that requires manual entry for tracking.

The key component for the auditor to confirm is the overall effectiveness of the program with a focus on maintenance items which can pose a fire risk. This can be verified by visual observations, document reviews or interviews with maintenance staff.

The following points should be considered for the mechanical system preventative maintenance program;

A formal preventative maintenance program should be in place. The program can be either predictive or reactionary.

A method should be in place to log and track items requiring repair or that have been repaired.

The program should include the inspection of friction producing equipment such as bearings, conveyor spools, belt drives, etc.

Vibration monitoring should be considered for rotating equipment.

Temperature monitoring or infrared scanning should be considered on large motors and high speed bearings (i.e.; planer)

Appendix A—References and Links

* WorkSafeBC “Sawmills”: <http://worksafebc.com/news_room/features/2012/sawmills/default.asp>
  + Order: <http://worksafebc.com/news_room/news_releases/assets/nr_04_26_12/SawmillDirective.pdf>
  + Combustible Dust Strategy Phase 1 (sawmills): <http://www.worksafe.wcb.bc.ca/news_room/features/2012/assets/pdf/Combustible%20DustStrategyPhase1.pdf>
  + Combustible Dust Strategy Phase 2 information bulletin: <http://www.worksafebc.com/news_room/features/2012/assets/pdf/IBCombustableDustStrategy.pdf>
* Emergency Management BC (Office of the Fire Commissioner): <http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/ofc/services/index.htm>
  + Fire Safety Planning for buildings containing wood dust producing operations (FIPI letter): <http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/ofc/services/bulletins/pdf/ib_fsp_building_wood_dust.pdf>
  + Combustible Dust: <http://www.embc.gov.bc.ca/ofc/services/bulletins/pdf/ib_combustible_dust.pdf>
* BC Safety Authority: <http://www.safetyauthority.ca/>
  + Orders:
    - <http://www.safetyauthority.ca/alert/electrical-safety-order-electrical-equipment-located-sawmills>
    - <http://www.safetyauthority.ca/alert/safety-order-combustible-dust-hazard-wood-processing-facilities>
* FP Innovation: <https://fpinnovations.ca/Pages/home.aspx>
  + 2013 Industry Dust Sampling Report: <http://www.cofi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/dust_sampling_protocol.pdf>
  + Sampling Protocols: <http://www.cofi.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/dust_sampling_protocol.pdf>
    - NFPA: References; to but not limited to;
  + NFPA 664: Standard for the Prevention of Fires and Explosions in Wood Processing and Woodworking Facilities
  + NFPA 654: Standard for the Prevention of Fire and Dust Explosions from the Manufacturing, Processing, and Handling of Combustible Particulate Solids
  + NFPA 69: Standard on Explosion Prevention Systems
* FM Global Data Sheets
  + Prevention and Mitigation of combustible dust explosion and fire; Data Sheet 7-76  
    <http://www.fmglobal.com/FMGlobalRegistration/Vshared/FMDS0776.pdf>

Appendix B—Sample Interview Questions for Auditors

1. What are the hazards of dust accumulations and when are the levels deemed hazardous?

2. What do you do to protect yourself from the hazards of wood dust accumulations?

3. Where do you go to find out more information on the hazards of wood dust?

4. Are you aware of your right to refuse unsafe work?

5. What training have you had on the hazards of wood dust?

6. How often is this education and training reviewed?

7. What are your responsibilities for managing the hazards of wood dust?

8. What methods do you use to clean up wood dust?

9. What sort of training have you received regarding the Fire Safety Plan and emergency response procedures?

A) Are there drills? When was the last one?

B) What are your responsibilities on the Fire Safety Plan and emergency response procedures?

Appendix C—Suggested Auditor Qualifications

To ensure the credibility and value of the wood dust mitigation and control audit, the audit should be conducted by an individual that is qualified to make a comprehensive evaluation the facility as well as the programs employed to define and manage the dust hazard. Although auditor qualifications are not strictly defined at this time, a combination of the following is suggested as minimum requirement for an individual conducting the audit:

Industry knowledge and work experience in woodworking facilities, sawmills in particular – minimum 3 to 5 years

Understanding and knowledge of applicable codes, standards and guidelines

NFPA – dust hazard classification, fire and explosion prevention, boiler and combustion safety, etc.

IEC – classification of explosive atmospheres

BC Fire Code – hazardous processes and operations

BC Building Code – service room construction requirements

Canadian Electrical Code – electrical installations and safety requirements

CSA codes – natural gas and propane installation, storage and handling

Education and/or professional designation

Professional Engineer (P. Eng.) or Engineer-in-Training (E.I.T.)

Applied Science Technologist (A.S.T.) or Certified Engineering Technologist (C.E.T.)

Canadian Risk Manager (C.R.M.)

Certified Fire Protection Specialist (C.F.P.S.)

National Fire Protection Association (N.F.P.A.) fire inspector certification (CFI or CFI-II)

Certified Fire and Explosion Investigator (C.F.E.I.)

Inspector/auditor from a regulating authority such as B.C.S.A., WorkSafe BC or O.S.H.A. with direct experience in the woodworking industry

Journeyman electrician with knowledge on hazardous electrical classifications

Specific education, training and experience related to auditing of industrial facilities and management programs/systems

Please note that the codes, standards, guidelines, education and professional designations referenced above are primarily for Canada. Where appropriate, the international equivalent should be considered.