TOOLBOX TALK AWARENESS PACKAGES

HAZ-RSP · Respiratory Sensitisers Awareness

Product Overview

Audience: Spray painters, bakers, woodworkers, and anyone who works with isocyanates, flour, wood dust, enzymes or latex, and their supervisors · Duration: 20–30 minutes

Version 1.0 · 22 November 2026

For spray painters, bakers, woodworkers and anyone who works with isocyanates, flour, wood dust, enzymes or latex: occupational asthma, why sensitisation is for life, the controls, and reporting symptoms early.

Respiratory sensitisers are substances that can make the airways allergic. Common ones at work are isocyanates in 2-pack paints, foams, adhesives and coatings; flour and grain dust in bakeries and mills; some wood dusts; enzymes used in baking and detergent making; and natural rubber latex, such as in powdered gloves. Breathing them in can cause occupational asthma and a runny, blocked nose. Once a person is sensitised, even a tiny amount can bring on an attack, and it is usually for life.

This talk covers what respiratory sensitisers are, where they are found, how sensitisation and occupational asthma happen, the early signs, and the controls: safer products and methods first, spray booths and extraction, low-dust methods, the respirator the SDS and procedure require, and health monitoring where it applies. It covers why reporting symptoms early matters. It is awareness, not spray painting, respirator fitting or health monitoring training.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the session participants will be able to:

- Name the common respiratory sensitisers at work: isocyanates, flour and grain dust, some wood dusts, enzymes and latex
- Explain sensitisation: how the airways become allergic, and why once sensitised it is usually for life
- Recognise the early signs of occupational asthma and rhinitis, including symptoms that ease on days off
- Explain the controls, starting with safer products and methods and keeping dust, mist and vapour out of the air
- Use the controls: spray booths, extraction, low-dust methods, and the respirator the SDS and procedure require
- Report symptoms early, take part in health monitoring where it applies, and report problems

What it covers

Module	Covers
Why it matters	What respiratory sensitisers are; Where they are found; Once sensitised
Controls that work	Safer products and methods; Booths, extraction and low dust; The right respirator
Your part	Spot the early signs; Health monitoring; Report it early

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Activities

- Where is the sensitiser: workers find the risk in four jobs, from spraying 2-pack paint to tipping flour into a mixer, and decide on a safer way
- What would you do: workers decide what to do in four situations, from a cough that clears up on holidays to a workmate spraying outside the booth to save time

What is in the package

Item	File
Editable PowerPoint presentation with speaker notes, plus PDF	02_TRAINING_PRESENTATION/Training Presentation.pptx and .pdf
Facilitator guide with a running sheet, discussion prompts and model answers	03_FACILITATOR_GUIDE/Facilitator Guide.docx and .pdf
Participant handout with the key points to take away	04_PARTICIPANT_HANDOUT/Participant Handout.docx and .pdf
Attendance record form, to capture who attended, when, and who facilitated	06_RECORDS/Attendance Record.docx and .pdf
Excel attendance register	06_RECORDS/Attendance Register.xlsx
Multiple-choice theory assessment, to record understanding if your business wants to	05_ASSESSMENT/Theory Assessment.docx and .pdf
Answer key for the assessment	05_ASSESSMENT/Assessment Answer Key.docx and .pdf
Certificate template	06_RECORDS/Certificate Template.docx
Start here: Read Me First, Product Overview, Permitted Use Terms, Version Information	01_START_HERE/ (four PDFs)

What you need to deliver it

- A facilitator such as a supervisor, leading hand or WHS adviser who has read the facilitator guide and knows your site's arrangements for the topic
- A screen or projector, or printed slides or handouts: it works in a crib room, site office or on a video call
- Your own site procedures for the topic, to point to during the session

Questions

Does it cover spray painting with isocyanates and health monitoring? Only as awareness. Spraying 2-pack paints needs its own procedure, a spray booth or other controls, and the respirator the SDS and procedure require, which for spraying is often supplied air. Some work with isocyanates needs health monitoring arranged by the business with a doctor; the talk explains what it is for. The talk quotes no exposure limits: check them in the SDS and with your regulator.

Can we add our own site procedures and photos? Yes. The slides, handout and guide are editable, and the facilitator guide marks the places to add your own procedures, contacts and photos of your workplace.

Do we have to use the assessment? No. It is there if your business wants a record that each worker understood the key points. The attendance record on its own shows who attended and when.

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TOOLBOX TALK

Respiratory Sensitisers Awareness

Once sensitised, usually for life: isocyanates, flour, wood dust, enzymes and latex

20–30 minutes · Spray painters, bakers, woodworkers, and anyone who works with isocyanates, flour, wood dust, enzymes or latex, and their supervisors

[Company name] · [Date] · [Facilitator name]

RSP

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What this talk is, and is not

This talk covers

- ✓ What respiratory sensitisers are
- ✓ Sensitisation and occupational asthma
- ✓ The controls that keep them out of the air
- ✓ Reporting symptoms early

This talk is not

- ✕ Spray painting or booth training
- ✕ Respirator fit training
- ✕ Health monitoring or medical advice
- ✕ Our procedure: **[Our sensitiser procedure]**

Awareness only. Spray painting, respirator use and health monitoring need their own procedures, training and a doctor.

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Where respiratory sensitisers are found

Some dusts, mists and vapours can make your airways allergic.

- Isocyanates: 2-pack paints, foams, glues, coatings
- Flour and grain dust: bakeries, mills, silos
- Some wood dusts: joinery, sawmills, furniture
- Enzymes: baking improvers and detergents
- Latex: powdered natural rubber gloves

A composite example

- A baker tips bags of flour into a mixer every morning. She has a runny nose and a cough at work.
- On holidays they clear up. Back at work, she starts to wheeze.

Symptoms that ease on days off are a warning sign.

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Duties under health and safety laws

The business must

- Identify sensitisers in the workplace
- Use safer products and methods
- Control dust, mist and vapour
- Arrange health monitoring where required

You must

- Follow the procedure
- Use the booth, extraction and respirator
- Report symptoms early
- Report faults and near misses

Most health and safety laws give these duties. Check the law where you work (in Australia, WHS or OHS laws).

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The order of controls for sensitisers

1. **Elimination** A process that does not use the sensitiser
2. **Substitution** Products without isocyanates; powder-free non-latex gloves
3. **Isolation** Spray booths; enclosed mixers; keep others out
4. **Engineering** Extraction at the source; low-dust handling
5. **Administrative** Procedures, cleaning, health monitoring, signs
6. **PPE** The respirator the SDS and procedure require

HIGHER ORDER

Higher order controls remove or control the hazard at the source, or put a barrier between people and the hazard.

LOWER ORDER

Lower order controls rely on people to do a thing or wear a thing, every time, tired, distracted or rushed.

Behaviours are not on the hierarchy, but behaviours and culture decide whether every control on it actually works.

A dust mask is not the answer for spraying 2-pack paint.

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Respiratory Sensitisers Awareness

Participant handout · keep this

Some dusts, mists and vapours can make your airways allergic, usually for life. Keep them out of the air. Keep this page.

The order of controls

1. A process without the sensitiser
2. Safer products; powder-free non-latex gloves
3. Spray booths; enclosed mixers
4. Extraction at the source; low-dust handling
5. Procedures, cleaning, health monitoring
6. The respirator the SDS and procedure require

The early signs

- Runny nose, sneezing, itchy eyes
- Cough, wheeze; better on days off

Never

- Spray 2-pack paint outside the booth
- Clean up dust with compressed air

Before you start

- ☐ Does this job involve isocyanates, flour, wood dust, enzymes or latex?
- ☐ Is there a safer product or a low-dust method?
- ☐ Is the booth or extraction on and working?
- ☐ Am I wearing the respirator the SDS and procedure require?
- ☐ Have I had any cough, wheeze or runny nose at work?

Symptoms

- Report them early; see a doctor
- Asthma attack: their plan; call your local emergency number (000 in Australia)

Who and where

- **[Our sensitiser procedure]**
- **[Health monitoring arrangements]**
- **[Who to report to here]**

Once you are sensitised, it is usually for life. Keep it out of the air, and report symptoms early.

This is awareness training. It is not a licence, a ticket, a permit or a competency. It is not spray painting, respirator fit or health monitoring training, or medical advice.

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