

# Three Myths about Fugitive Dust

Written by Brad Carr on April 29, 2016

## Fugitive Dust

There are many things that can cause harm inside a plant or factory, but one of the least discussed and understood is fugitive dust. It is possible that workers spend each day around fugitive dust and do not realize how dangerous – and deadly – it can be. If enough accumulates, fugitive dust can cause a fire or an explosion. While not as obvious, it is as big a hazard as any large piece of machinery or other equipment found in a plant. And even if fugitive dust is talked about, frequently there is a lot of contradictory information about it. Here are a few common myths:

### It is All The Same

Fugitive dust is generally created during the manufacturing process, and this is why it can vary significantly. Depending upon what is being made, the dust could be different in many ways, including the size, density, shape, and static charge. This is why it is crucial that each plant knows exactly what it is dealing with.

### Filtration Systems Can Capture All of It

Filtration systems can be effective at eliminating dust, but they have limitations. For example, due to space issues and other constraints, hoods are often unable to be placed directly over where the dust is created. Plus, even if a hood can be located where the dust is produced, it can be easy for dust to spread to other places without anyone even realizing it. The hood will only be able to collect a certain amount. In addition, when dust is sucked up through the vents, over

time it wears down parts of the ducts, and this means that eventually the dust will leak back in.

## **Cleaning is Really the Best Way to Eliminate It**

One of the biggest problems with fugitive dust is that it can settle everywhere. In a plant where a lot is produced, dust will end up in every nook and cranny, including overhead structures. To address this, often workers are tasked with using ladders or other pieces of equipment to reach overhead structures. In addition to the danger, there is little chance that they are able to find and clean all of the dust.

## **The Fugitive Dust Solution**

A filtration system will not work, and neither will cleaning. What is the answer? The most effective way to deal with fugitive dust is with industrial fans. When placed at strategic points throughout a plant, the fans will eliminate dust as soon as it is created. Unlike the hoods, there is no need for the fans to be directly over the source of the dust. And because they will be on the ceiling, there is almost no chance that dust will be able to build up on rafters or on the tops of tall equipment. If dust is a problem in your plant, the worst thing you can do is ignore it.