



CFMEU WA SAFETY GUIDANCE

27/06/2016

Procedure for the Handling Cutting & Storage of MDF (Medium Density Fibre Board)

All Sub-contractors on site that are using MDF **must** Familiarise and include this procedure within their Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) and JHA / JSA prior to any work commencing on site.

1. DESCRIPTION OF MATERIAL

Particleboard or fibre board such as chipboard and MDF are manufactured from particles or fibres and are usually bonded with **urea / formaldehyde** resin. The manufactured board is largely made from softwood, but may be veneered with variety of finishes including hardwood. These boards are widely used in manufacture of office, shop & apartment fittings & furniture.

2. HAZARDS.

The hazard arising from handling & working with particleboard or fibreboard that are bonded with **urea / formaldehyde** resin include exposures to wood dusts & potential formaldehyde vapour.

3. ADVERSE HEALTH EFFECTS.

a. Wood Dusts

- Irritation of lungs – reduced lung capacity
- Skin allergies – dermatitis
- Eye irritation
- Asthma
- Increased risk of cancer; nasal, larynx, lung

b. Formaldehyde

- Irritation to the nose, throat, eyes & skin
- Respiratory illness
- Asthma
- Cancer



4. OHS SAFE WORKING PROCEDURES

4.1 TRAINING

All employees involved in the handling & cutting of MDF material should receive special induction that includes education on the respective health hazards and training in the safe work method procedures.

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4.2 PROCUREMENT

Subcontractors should note that only the Australian made MDF product should be purchased which is clearly labeled Australian made LFE = low formaldehyde emission. Furthermore, all products on site must be accompanied by a MSDS.

4.3 STORAGE

MDF should be stored in shaded areas to inhibit any release of formaldehyde vapour. The plastic packaging on the bundles of MDF should be retained whilst in storage.

4.4 CUTTING

a. Designated Cutting room

All cutting of MDF products should be undertaken in a designated cutting room. This facility should take the form of purpose built enclosure, or an existing room with lockable door.

b. Cutting room set-up

- The cutting room must have ventilation
- Doors must be closed at all times
- A dust collection bag should be installed on the power-cutting tool.
- Regular daily clean up with approved industrial vacuum cleaner (in addition to the dust collection bag on the power tool) will be sufficient.
- On no account should the dust be vented out into the outside atmosphere.
- All dust collection should be double bagged and sealed prior to disposal in site rubbish bins.

4.5 SIGNAGE

For designated cutting room = MDF CUTTING NO UNAUTHORISED ENTRY

For notice boards = NO ENTRY TO MDF CUTTING ROOM UNLESS AUTHORISED

a. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) & Hygiene

All employees involved in the cutting of MDF must at all times use the following PPE

- P2 respirator
- Eye protection
- Hearing protection
- Disposal coveralls

Prior to crib breaks employees must thoroughly wash face, hands & arms.

b. Additional Procedure

Sub-contractors are to pre-cut off – site so as to minimize cutting on – site.

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