



## Controlling Dust

If you have ever experienced property damage, you are aware that restoration and remediation efforts and construction work go hand in hand. They are connected in an even bigger way through a tiny, tiny little item: dust. A review of dust would seem to be fairly straightforward, however the science behind it, is not nearly as simple as the word. Dust is the term that is applied to small particulates, particularly those that settle out of the air. Therefore, the simplest explanation is that dust consists of tiny solid particles carried by air currents. Dust is formed naturally by burning, shedding, and erosion; as well as by mechanical means such as drilling, sanding, and sawing.

Dust is generally measured in micrometers, more commonly known as microns. Over the years Scientists have applied many gradations to dust based upon size. Coarse dust generally refers to particles that are temporarily suspended in the air but are too large to remain airborne for very long. Coarse dust settles rather quickly while dust of a smaller size, generally referred to by the term particulate matter (PM), can remain in the air indefinitely. Government agencies such as the EPA are typically most concerned with the smallest particles, those classified as PM 10 and PM 2.5. To help give you an idea of the size, fine beach sand is 90 microns in diameter and a human hair is between 50-70 microns in diameter.

Years ago, most dust that accumulated in buildings was a mixture of natural, organic materials. Back then it was primarily made up of soil particles, skin cells, hair, plant material, and insects. While these components still make up a significant share of dust, our modern dust contains a number of products that are substantially different from its historical predecessor. In particular, dust now contains measurable amounts of microscopic plastic particles, heavy metals and even persistent organic pollutants.

It does not matter if you are remodeling a kitchen or completing a fire restoration project, dust will be generated. Controlling the dust is becoming a more common practice on job sites and it typically involves up to six different approaches:

- 1) **Creation of negative pressure inside the work area in order to keep dust generated during the project from migrating to other areas.**
- 2) **Dust collection at the point of creation by utilizing shrouds on power tools or vacuum nozzles in the immediate vicinity of the work.**
- 3) **Installation of isolation barriers to segregate the work area from other parts of the structure.**
- 4) **HEPA filtration of the air being removed from the work area or being collected in vacuums.**
- 5) **Detailed cleaning of all surfaces in the work zone with products/techniques designed to capture small particles.**
- 6) **The use of air cleaning methods, such as air scrubbing, air fogging, and air washing, during the detailed cleaning in order to ensure that small dust particles are captured and removed rather than re-suspended.**

Two of the biggest factors driving contractors to build more dust control efforts into their projects is related to the information age that we live in and the efforts at public education/awareness of indoor air quality issues. When is the last time anyone has been to the library to look up information on a particular subject? Now, all we have to do is point and click, and we can find out unlimited information on any subject. That coupled with public awareness programs from agencies such as the EPA and the American Lung Association, individuals have real information about the impacts of dust accumulation.

**FROM ALL OF US AT THE GERLOFF COMPANY WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A Happy Thanksgiving.  
Until next time my friends, be prepared and stay safe.**

# November 2017

**Events**  
 November 1: IFMA Luncheon  
 November 2: ACA Luncheon  
 November 9: IREM Luncheon  
 November 9: Austin BOMA Luncheon  
 November 14: SACA Luncheon  
 November 14: AAFAME Luncheon  
 November 15: SA BOMA Luncheon  
 November 15: IIASA Luncheon  
 November 16: SAABE Luncheon  
 November 23: Thanksgiving Holiday Closed

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 IFMA Luncheon	2 ACA Luncheon	3	4
5	6	7	8	9 IREM Luncheon Austin BOMA Lunch	10	11
12	13	14 SACA Luncheon AAFAME Luncheon	15 SA Boma Luncheon IIASA Luncheon	16 SAABE Luncheon	17	18
19	20	21	22	23 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

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