



WOOD DUST DANGER

By Graham Ely

How often have we heard said:

"I will only be there for a little while. "

"I am only cutting three pieces of wood. "

"I will be quick I just need to sand these few pieces on the edges."

Of course we have air cleaners now, but do they take much dust out of the air? This is a rhetorical question, as we do not exactly know, what we do know is that members in these circumstances often do not put on face masks or hearing protection.

Our Induction Process requires that face masks and hearing protection are supplied for working in the machine room. So, why do we make excuses and forget vital messages? Far too many of our members (almost everyone) do not wear masks in the machine room (including myself). The air filters and extractors help a lot but we should be aware of the dangers of wood dust and what it can do to you.

Until recently I was not aware that **ALL** wood dust is classified as **CARCINOGENIC** (liable to cause cancer), and I'll bet that this information will catch most (if not all) members by surprise. It doesn't help the situation when most (if not all) wood glues contain **FORMALDEHYDE** - also a carcinogen.

The Woodworking Australia website states:

"In Australia all wood dust is now classified as carcinogenic (liable to cause cancer). This list has been compiled to give woodworkers a little bit of an insight into the potential health hazards posed by some of the timbers that are used.

This list is not meant to discourage you from woodworking just as a guide to help identify some of the problems you may be having with your health or may possibly have in the future. It is a wise investment to purchase a good respirator especially if you are a woodturner or do a lot of sanding. You may also need to look at putting a dust extractor into your workshop and even a small particle dust extractor which can eliminate particles as small as 1 micron in size (invisible to the naked eye)."

The URL <https://www.ubeaut.com.au/woodstuf.htm> takes you to the home page of Woodworking Australia. You can click on the words "**BADWOODS**" which will take you to an alphabetic list of all common (and not so common) timbers used in projects, and whilst it is not a comprehensive list of timbers, their hazards are listed. The list is too long to be reproduced here, you should look for more information at:

Cancer Council Australia: Cancer information and support - www.cancer.org.au

Go to the Cancer Council website search for Wood Dust, click on the first item – "**wood products**" - locate and download the wood dust fact sheet PDF.

This is an example of what to expect:

Alpine ash

Australia

Irritation to nose, eyes
and throat, dermatitis

REMEMBER. It only takes 1 cigarette or 1 visit to the machine room without a mask.....