



WORKPLACE EXPOSURE LIMITS ARE CHANGING

What Food Manufacturers Need to Know

New limits take effect from 1 December 2026

Australia is transitioning from **Workplace Exposure Standards (WES)** to **Workplace Exposure Limits (WEL)**. For many airborne contaminants, the limit itself is also changing, with some significant reductions.

Food manufacturing workplaces can generate airborne contaminants through ingredients, production, cleaning, refrigeration, maintenance and mobile plant. Now is the time to identify which changes are relevant to your operations.

What should food manufacturers do now?

- **IDENTIFY** THE DUSTS, FUMES, GASES AND VAPOURS GENERATED OR USED ACROSS YOUR OPERATIONS.
- **CHECK** WHICH SUBSTANCES HAVE NEW OR CHANGED WORKPLACE EXPOSURE LIMITS.
- **ASSESS** WHETHER EXISTING EXPOSURE MONITORING REMAINS REPRESENTATIVE AND SUFFICIENT.
- **CONTROL** EXPOSURE THROUGH APPROPRIATE VENTILATION/LEV, ISOLATION, WORK PRACTICES AND PPE.
- **PREPARE** BEFORE 1 DECEMBER RATHER THAN WAITING FOR THE NEW LIMITS TO TAKE EFFECT.

How JTA can help?



IDENTIFY CONTAMINANTS >> ASSESS EXPOSURE >> AIR MONITORING >> COMPARE LIMITS >> RECOMMEND CONTROLS

Do you know which WEL changes affect your workplace?

SOME EXPOSURE LIMITS ARE REDUCING SIGNIFICANTLY

EXAMPLE CONTAMINANT	CURRENT WES	NEW WEL	CHANGE
Flour (cereal) dust	No flour-specific	0.5 mg/m ³	NEW LIMIT
Grain dust	4 mg/m ³	1.5 mg/m ³	62.5% ↓
Manganese***	1 mg/m ³	0.1 mg/m ³ inhalable / 0.02 mg/m ³ respirable	NEW LIMITS
Toluene	50 ppm	20 ppm	60% ↓

These are examples only. The changes relevant to each food manufacturing workplace depend on its ingredients, chemicals, equipment & processes. ***New manganese WELs: 0.1 mg/m³ inhalable and 0.02 mg/m³ respirable.

Common airborne exposures in food manufacturing

EXPOSURE	WHERE IT MAY OCCUR
Flour & ingredient dust	Weighing, tipping, mixing, milling and ingredient handling
Grain dust	Grain receiving, transfer, milling, storage and processing
Cleaning chemicals	Sanitation, washdown, chemical mixing and handling
Ammonia	Refrigeration systems, plant rooms and maintenance
Carbon dioxide	Refrigeration, carbonation and fermentation
Diesel exhaust	Loading areas, yards, warehouses and mobile plant
Welding fumes	Maintenance, fabrication and engineering activities

Important: not every exposure listed above has a changing limit. The substances relevant to your workplace depend on the specific activities undertaken at your sites.

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