



WORKPLACE EXPOSURE LIMITS ARE CHANGING

What 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.

For manufacturers, now is the time to identify which substances and processes are relevant and review whether existing exposure monitoring and controls remain appropriate.

What should manufacturers do now?

- **IDENTIFY** THE AIRBORNE CONTAMINANTS 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 ENGINEERING CONTROLS, VENTILATION/LEV, 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 DRAMATICALLY

EXAMPLE CONTAMINANT	CURRENT WES	NEW WEL	CHANGE
Manganese*** – dust & compounds	1 mg/m ³	0.1 mg/m ³ inhalable / 0.02 mg/m ³	NEW LIMITS
Maleic anhydride	0.25 ppm	0.0025 ppm	99% ↓
Molybdenum – soluble compounds	5 mg/m ³	0.5 mg/m ³	90% ↓
Styrene monomer	50 ppm	20 ppm	60% ↓

These are examples only. The changes relevant to your workplace depend on the substances used or generated by your particular processes. ***New manganese WELs: 0.1 mg/m³ inhalable and 0.02 mg/m³ respirable.

Common airborne exposures in manufacturing

EXPOSURE	WHERE IT MAY OCCUR
Welding fumes & metals	Welding, fabrication, cutting and hot work
Metal dusts	Grinding, machining, polishing and metal processing
Solvents & VOCs	Painting, coating, adhesives, degreasing and cleaning
Process dusts	Mixing, weighing, transfer, cutting and production
Diesel exhaust	Mobile plant, forklifts, loading areas and enclosed spaces
Silica dust	Cutting, grinding or processing silica-containing materials

Important: not every exposure listed above has a changing limit. For example, the respirable crystalline silica exposure limit is not changing on 1 December 2026, but silica remains an important workplace exposure that must continue to be managed.

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