



# Local exhaust ventilation (LEV) systems and your legal requirements

The Safety health and Welfare at Work (Chemical Agents) Regulations 2001 and the Safety health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007 require that Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) systems are well maintained, thoroughly examined and tested at regular intervals.

## Regulation 30: Inspection of work equipment

An employer shall ensure that -

- (a) where the safety of work equipment depends on the installation conditions -
  - (i) an initial inspection is carried out after installation is completed and before it is first put into service, and
  - (ii) an inspection is carried out after assembly at any new site, or in any new location, and that the work equipment is installed correctly and operating properly
- (b) in the case of work equipment which is exposed to conditions causing deterioration liable to result in a danger to safety or health -
  - (i) periodic inspections and, where appropriate, testing is carried out
  - (ii) special inspections are carried out when exceptional circumstances arise which are liable to make the work equipment unsafe, including modification work, accidents, natural phenomena or prolonged inactivity, and
  - (iii) deterioration is detected and remedied in good time
- (c) inspections carried out under paragraphs (a) and (b) are carried out by a competent person and are appropriate to the nature, location and use of the work equipment
- (d) the results of inspections carried out under paragraphs (a) and (b) are recorded and kept available for five years from the date of inspection, for inspection by an inspector, and access to these records is made available to users of the work equipment upon request, and
- (e) when work equipment is used in another place of work, it is accompanied by evidence of the last inspection carried out under paragraphs (a) and (b).

Regulation 30 is far-reaching in its scope and is not limited to any particular piece of equipment. It covers the requirements for inspection and the availability of inspection records.

It relates to both work equipment which is permanently installed at a location and to that which is moved from place to place requiring assembly each time. In either case equipment should not go into use until it has been inspected by a competent person to ensure that it has been properly installed and is safe for operation. Evidence of such inspections must be recorded and kept available for Health and Safety Authority inspection.

All work equipment is subject to varying levels of deterioration. Deterioration could be due to a range of factors, including corrosion, chemical attack, erosion, friction, fatigue, impact damage etc, which in turn can lead to erratic machine behaviour, structural failure, loss of containment of dangerous substances, failure to maintain adequate protection around dangerous parts and so on. Reference to equipment includes any associated monitoring and alarm systems.

Employers are required to set up programmes to maintain the integrity of work equipment by a system of ongoing monitoring which will detect deterioration in sufficient time to allow remedial measures to be taken. The inspection frequency should be based on how quickly the work equipment, or its parts, is likely to deteriorate and therefore give rise to unacceptable risk. In some cases, such as steam boilers in factories, there are statutory duties which determine the minimum level of inspection and Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application).

Where testing is required, this may be called for in the manufacturer's instructions, specified in a Regulation or guidance document or required by the competent person.



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Inspection results should be stored in a secure manner and be readily retrievable when required. While Regulation 30 does not prescribe the details to be examined or the format of the inspection results, these details may be prescribed under other Regulations for certain types of plant. Advice may also be found in relevant standards or codes of practice.

The scheme of inspections must take into account the known failure mechanisms of the work equipment.

In general, records should contain information on the:

- Type and model of equipment
- Means of identification
- Location
- Date of inspection
- Personnel who carried out the inspection
- Extent of inspection or test
- Faults found
- Remedial measures required, including deadlines for action
- Details of remedial action that has been taken.

The employees who use the equipment are entitled to see the inspection reports.

Evidence of the last inspection may take the form of a copy of the report for large items of plant and some form of labelling or tagging for smaller items.

The thorough testing and examination of LEV plants must be carried out at least every 14 months or more frequently for specific processes (in some cases every six months).

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