

# LEV Testing

## What You Need to Know



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# What is LEV?

Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) is an engineering control system to reduce exposures to airborne contaminants such as dust, mist, fume, vapour or gas in a workplace.

Systems may include:

- Welding fume extraction systems
- Spray booths
- Wood dust extraction systems
- Grinding dust extraction systems
- Laboratory fume cupboards
- Soldering fume extraction systems
- Plus other exhaust ventilation systems for the control of hazardous substances (e.g. dust, fume, gases or vapours)



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# How Frequently Should LEV Systems be Tested?

According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), an employer 'must maintain LEV system performance'.

In addition, COSHH 'Regulation 9 – Maintenance', states that a thorough examination and test must be conducted at least every 14 months\*. However, it is possible to establish exact frequency of testing according to the outcome of the risk assessment, as detailed in 'Regulation 6 – Risk Assessment'.

Maintenance regimes can be evaluated by observing evidence of poor repair such as holes in ducting or blocked and dirty extraction systems.

\*Exceptions to this are given in Schedule 4 of the COSHH Regulations



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# COSHH Regulations 2002

"COSHH is the law that requires employers to control substances that are hazardous to health and includes nanomaterials."

*HSE*



## **Regulation 6 - Suitable & Sufficient Risk Assessments**

Assessing the risks and deciding whether the controls are adequate

## **Regulation 7 - Hierarchy of Control**

A step by step guide to follow to help ensure that exposure to harmful contaminants is prevented or adequately controlled

## **Regulation 8 - Use of Control Measures**

The employer must ensure that the Employee is using the controls correctly. The employee also has a duty to use the control measures correctly and report any defects.

## **Regulation 9 - Maintenance, Examination & Testing of Controls**

All Local Exhaust Systems (LEV) should be thoroughly examined & tested at least once in a period 14 months by a competent person. This is to ensure that your system remains effective at control.



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## HSG258

This guidance, published by the HSE, is for employers who use, or intend to use LEV. It is also for suppliers of new LEV equipment.

The publication outlines the principles of choosing, designing, commissioning and testing LEV equipment.



HSG258 lists 3 types of assessment:

### Commissioning

This is a Thorough Examination and Test of a system only you are benchmarking the results recorded against the design criteria. Normally undertaken when a system is first installed or when there have been any alterations to the system.

### LEV Test

This is a Thorough Examination and Test (TE<sub>XT</sub>) of a system. We benchmark the results recorded against Commissioning or previous TE<sub>XT</sub> data. This is a mandatory statutory assessment undertaken at least once in a period of 14 months.

### Weekly checks

These are visual assessments to ensure that the LEV System is in good condition.



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## Dust & Fume Health Risks

Health issues caused by exposure to harmful dust and fume include:

- Occupational asthma
- Pneumonia/pneumoconiosis
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Mesothelioma
- Silicosis
- Cancer

With the above diseases, there is often a long latency period between exposure to harmful substances and the onset of symptoms. When symptoms do appear they are irreversible.

With the right control measures in place, these work-related diseases are preventable.



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# Prevalence of Work-related Lung Disease

**12,000**

Lung disease deaths each year  
estimated to be linked to  
past exposures at work

*Death Certificates  
and Attributable  
Fraction Estimates*

**18,000**

Estimated annual new cases of  
self-reported breathing  
or lung problems caused or  
made worse by work

*Labour Force Survey (LFS)*



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## What Records of Testing Should be Kept?

A record of testing must be kept for at least 5 years. What's more, the employer, supervisor and operator must all be aware of when the last examination was conducted and when the next one is due. For this reason, all information about testing and examination should be kept on the installed LEV system for the life of the system.

## Who Can Perform an LEV Test?

LEV systems must be regularly tested by a qualified person. The minimum qualification needed to test LEV equipment is the P601 – Thorough Examination & Testing of Local Exhaust Ventilation (LEV) Systems.

P601 is a British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS) approved course, which is recognised by the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE), as well as the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) and the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS).



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# Employer Responsibilities - A Checklist

The employer must:



Maintain LEV system performance



Arrange a thorough examination and test every 14 months



Know whether or not an examination has been done or when it is due (and so must supervisors and operators)



Ensure the examination and test is conducted by a qualified person (minimum qualification required is P601)



Keep a record of testing for at least 5 years



Ensure all information about testing and examination is kept on the installed LEV system for the life of the system



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