

# Work Practice Guidelines

## RCF Blanket Cutting

Cutting refractory ceramic fiber blanket is a common operation during its installation. Some workers performing this operation have been observed to have RCF exposures that exceed the industry recommended exposure guideline (REG) of 0.5 fibers/cc of air (8-hour TWA).

Effective engineering controls and proper work practices may reduce exposure to RCF. Engineering controls alone are not always sufficient, however, to reduce exposures below the REG. Therefore, proper work practices and personal protective equipment should always be used. Whenever possible, ensure blanket cutting is undertaken in a well-ventilated area.

The information and guidelines contained in the accompanying table are designed to assist customers in reducing workplace airborne RCF exposures. They are not intended to substitute for a comprehensive exposure assessment or engineering controls evaluation of the RCF manufacturing facility and its processes.

Want more information?

Contact the RCFC or a member company for more information:

Thermal Ceramics  
800-722-5681

Unifrax Corporation  
800-322-2293

Vesuvius USA Corporation  
800-355-1100



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## ENGINEERING CONTROLS

1. Local exhaust ventilation (LEV) should be used at the point of generation of the RCF and particulate material. Capture and transport velocities of the LEV system must be sufficient to capture and remove the airborne material and to prevent the material from reaching the breathing zone of the operator. In general, for manual cutting, a capture velocity of 150 to 250 feet per minute (fpm) and a transport velocity of 3,000 to 4,000 fpm are recommended. Please refer to ACGIH's [Industrial Ventilation - A Manual of Recommended Practice](#)<sup>1</sup> or consult an engineer specializing in industrial ventilation for proper LEV system design specifications.

2. If a band saw is used for finishing, refer to RCFC "Unit Operational Code of Practice & Engineering Control Guidebook"<sup>2</sup> - Band Saws for reference. In addition, cross-drafts created by fan use, traffic, or make-up air in the area may affect the efficiency of the LEV

## WORK PRACTICES

1. Ensure LEV system is operating properly.
2. Avoid performing blanket cutting operations in any manner that would create unnecessary generation of airborne dust. Hand tools, rather than mechanical tools, should be used whenever possible.
3. Do not throw, drop, or handle RCF materials excessively. Gently place RCF materials in staging area or packaging material.
4. **Keep work area clean.** Do not permit RCF waste material to accumulate in the work area. (Waste or scrap material should be placed into a covered container.) Waste or scrap RCF materials should be removed from the work area often to avoid unnecessary generation of airborne dust.
5. Use a HEPA-filtered vacuum or wet sweeping methods for clean-up when vacuuming is not possible.
6. Clean personal clothing with HEPA-filtered vacuum before leaving the work area.
7. Launder work clothes separately.
8. **DO NOT USE COMPRESSED AIR FOR CLEAN-UP ACTIVITIES!**

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

1. Because blanket cutting activities can result in exposures in excess of the REG, the use of a half-face respirator with P-100 filters is recommended.

NOTE: If occupational RCF exposure levels are known, a lower level of respiratory protection may be used as recommended in the Material Safety Data Sheet guidelines.

2. Long-sleeved clothing or disposable coveralls.
3. Gloves.
4. Safety glasses or goggles.

1. American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH); [Industrial Ventilation - A Manual of Recommended Practice](#); 23rd Edition; 1998  
2. RCF Coalition; "Unit Operational Code of Practice & Engineering Controls Guidebook"; 27-0201; 1998