

The Dust Deputy

A cyclonic dust control system

Reviewed by Greg Rössel

Gone are the days when a shop laden with collapsed-mine-shaft levels of dust was an indicator of high productivity. That's a good thing, because high levels of dust create endless rounds of time-wasting cleanups, and they make finishing (especially varnishing) a nightmare. There's another even more compelling reason to keep shop dust under control: The federal government lists dust created in the cutting and shaping of wood as a "known human carcinogen."

Relatively inexpensive dust and shaving removal devices have curbed the drifts and dunes that used to accumulate next to standing power equipment. Most new portable sanders have a provision for at least a dust-collection bag or, better, a port for a flexible hose that can be run to a (usually roaring) shop vacuum. The vacuum is also handy for collecting any other ambient dust kicking around the shop.

The weak link in the system is the shop vacuum itself. Most shop vacuums are rather awkward to clean out, many with attached tools that need to be removed and a clunky set of wheels that has to be dealt with. Then, there is the filter that readily plugs and cakes up with fine dust that must be removed on a regular basis. To make it worse, at the end of the cleaning, much of that previously contained dust ends up back in the air. If only



Regular and deluxe models of a cyclonic dust control system are available from Oneida.

there were a good way to intercept that sander dust before it hits the vacuum cleaner.

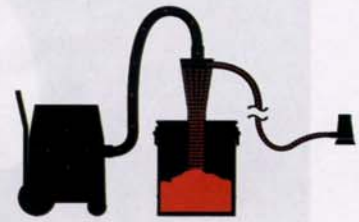
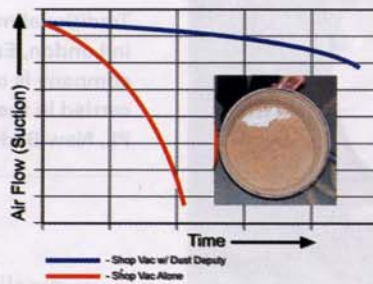
Enter, the Dust Deputy from Oneida Air Systems. It promises to preventively detain errant dust. The reason the Deputy's filter does not plug up is that there is no filter. The business part of the contraption is the seam-welded, in-line "cyclone"—the capped funnel-like device that is bolted to the canister top. There is a 1½" inlet for the dust-laden air and a 2" outlet on the top that runs to the vacuum cleaner. The idea here is that cyclone scavenges the dust out of the airflow and precipitates it into a container before it ever gets a chance to get to the filter of the shop vacuum.

The Deputy does do a fine job at pre-capturing even the finest dust without perceptibly reducing the

suction of the shop vacuum. Oneida claims a 99 percent deposit rate. While that number is hard to quantify, the cyclone does seem to intercept nearly all the detritus with nothing showing up in the tub of the vacuum.

I tested the Dust Deputy, and in that test, oak, Spanish cedar, mahogany, and construction plywood sanding dusts were all easily contained. I disconnected the hose from the sander and used it to suck up the accumulated dust in the interior of the tablesaw. Again, no problem. I then hooked it up to my old 12" Craftsman bandsaw and even connected it to my hand-held power planer, and the Deputy sucked it up and took it all in stride.

What this all means is that you can have a cleaner shop, and you can go a really long time without having to deal with odiously clogged filters or having to escort the shop vacuum outside for a trip to the dumpster or compost heap. The Deputy is remarkably easy to empty: You release one clamp, and the can is ready to go. And because another length of hose is needed in the system, you can be that much farther from that banshee shop vacuum. What's not to like?



The Deputy's cyclone is sold either as a stand-alone basic unit that can be affixed to a homemade plywood lid that is then clamped to a five-gallon sheetrock tub, or the deluxe version that is bolted onto a rugged steel lid which is clamped to a 10-gallon drum. Oneida also sells a static-dissipating hose and outlet adapters separately.

The basic Dust Deputy is priced at \$129; the deluxe unit at \$199. Contact Oneida Air Systems, Inc., 1001 West Fayette St., Syracuse, NY 13204; 800-732-4065; <www.oneida-air.com>.

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