

# Safety Solutions for 3D Additive Manufacturing Printing Processes

*Long before their headline grabbing use for overcoming PPE shortages, 3D printers have been used in Maker Spaces, Engineering Labs, R&D departments, and even homes across the globe.*



## The Hazards

**Additive Manufacturing is a marvel of the modern world.** Within hours, possibly even minutes, you can hold a pre-production version of a part to be used in a new design. Additive manufacturing technology, also called Fused Deposition Modeling (FDM), significantly compresses the product development life-cycle and lowers the cost burden of exploring new ideas and designs. All of this is good, great in fact, but brings with it some new concerns for safety.

Depending upon the type of filament used for printing (e.g. PLA, ABS, Nylon, etc.), hazardous vapors, fumes and particles can be emitted in dangerous concentrations. Ultrafine Particles (UFP) present risks that are associated with lung damage and translocation to the bloodstream (NHI). Harmful Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) are emitted in varying degrees and are highly dependent upon the filament material being used. Frequent exposure to UFPs and VOCs is now associated with adverse health effects on the human body.

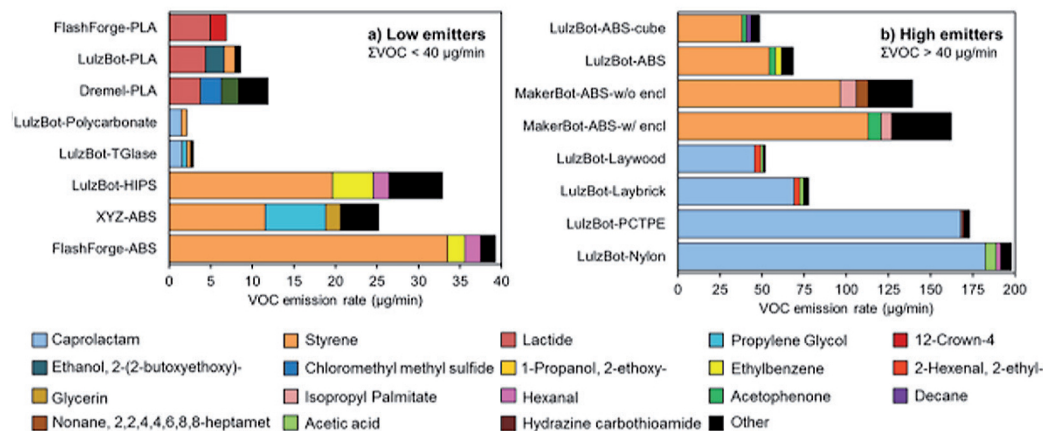


Image credit: P. Azimi, D. Zhao, C. Pouzet, N. E. Crain and B. Stephens, "Emissions of Ultrafine Particles and Volatile Organic Compounds from Commercially Available Desktop Three-Dimensional Printers with Multiple Filaments," *Environmental Science and Technology*, vol. 50, no. 3, pp. 1260-1268, 2016.

3D printing applications will also include post-processing methods to obtain the desired look and feel for your prototype. Cleaning, smoothing, welding, and surface finishing are all part of this process, and will require the use of chemicals (e.g., Dichloromethane, Ethyl Acetate, IPA, Acetone, THF). Such substances also pose a health hazard to the operator, which needs to be addressed with safety measure.

As with most source generation, the further away you are the less concentration you'll be exposed to and therefore the safer you should be. However, in many cases, the 3D printer is needed close by to the workstation or occupied areas. Therefore, most 3D printers should be housed in a protective enclosure, or equipped with an exhaust system, that will capture and remove the airborne hazards from the breathing zone.

Industry Applications for 3D Printing Include:

Medical & Dental Labs

Consumer Goods

Industrial Goods

Plastic Manufacturers

Mechanical & Design Engineering

Aerospace & Defense

Automotive

Robotics

Education

## Safely Adding 3D Printers to Your Space



Category	Feedstock Materials	Feedstock Form	Binding/Fusing	Most Prominent Potential Hazards
Material extrusion	Thermoplastics (may include additives)	Spoiled filament, pellet, or granulate	Electrical heating element-induced melting/cooling	Inhalation exposure to VOCs, particulate, additives; burns
Powder bed fusion	Metal, ceramic, or plastic	Powder	High-powered laser or electron beam heating	Inhalation/dermal exposure to powder, fume; explosion; laser/radiation exposure
Vat photopolymerization	Photopolymer	Liquid resin	Ultraviolet-laser induced curing	Inhalation of VOCs; dermal exposure to resins & solvents, ultraviolet exposure
Material jetting	Material jetting Photopolymer or wax	Liquid ink	Ultraviolet-light induced curing	Inhalation of VOCs; dermal exposure to resins & solvents, ultraviolet exposure
Binder jetting	Metal, ceramic, plastic, or sand	Powder	Adhesive	Inhalation/dermal exposure to powder; explosion; inhalation of VOCs, dermal exposure to binders
Sheet lamination	Metal, ceramic, or plastic	Rolled film or sheet	Adhesive or ultrasonic welding	Inhalation of fumes, VOCs; shock, laser/radiation exposure
Directed energy deposition	Metal	Powder or wire	Laser/electron beam heating	Inhalation/dermal exposure to powder, fume; explosion; laser/radiation exposure

Reference: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2019/04/09/am/>

As our awareness of this emerging hazard increases, new test protocols and standards such as UL2904 are being developed and adopted by 3D Printer manufacturers. Additionally, customers are implementing their own safety protocols based upon best practices and discussions with their peers. For example, Cornell University's EH&S Department has developed a 3D Printer Media Review on line, listing all the hazards of each type of media (aka filament) used. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology's EH&S website lists the hazards on line also, with excellent source material references.

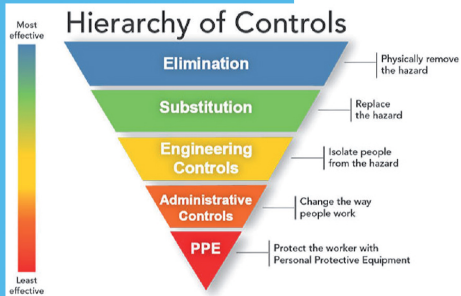


Image credit: CDC

The Hierarchy of Controls teaches us that elimination is the first step to reducing a risk. Since 3D printers are here to stay, we then must move to Substitution, the second step. Some filaments are less hazardous so substituting a lower temperature or otherwise safer filament is certainly worth investigating. But all filaments/media will emit some amount of vapors, nuisance odors and/or ultrafine particles. Distance and ventilation may be successfully used in large rooms, or areas with segregated ventilation, but in most cases capture and containment at the source is the safest path forward and this requires an engineering control, the third step in the hierarchy. Ductless filtering fume hoods are an engineering control that have been used for over 50 years.

A ductless filtering fume hood system, also known as a Containment Ventilated Enclosure (CVE), is a cost effective alternative to ducted exhaust systems which require make-up air to be brought into the room. Ductless filtering fume hoods system can be equipped with both HEPA (particulate) and carbon (chemical) filtration, thus providing total protection to the 3D Additive Printer users. This configuration allows the 3D Printer users to change filament materials and not be concerned about increasing the risk of exposure.

## Simplicity by Design

With products designed with simplicity in mind, Erlab's Captair CVEs require absolutely zero construction and are set-up in just minutes. This is possible due to our unique design allowing all hoods (CVEs) to be shipped completely knocked down (CKD) with the ability to be re-assembled within minutes of delivery. While simple by design, all hoods maintain the most important factor - safety. All hoods meet ASHRAE 110, AFNOR NFX, and ANSI Z9.5 standards, ensuring containment and filtration efficiency.





# About Eriab

*Eriab's state of the art Research & Development Laboratory relies exclusively on filtration.*

## We provide safety, we protect your health

Eriab invented the ductless fume hood in 1968. With more than 50 years of experience in the field of chemical filtration and protection of laboratory personnel; we know the formula for safety. With Eriab, you will never have to wonder or worry if our products are safe. We build each one of the following 7 ingredients into our products, and without all of them, your health and safety will be compromised.

### 1 Eriab R&D Laboratory

The engineers and chemists in our state-of-the-art R&D laboratory understand molecular filtration. We are committed to designing products that are safe and of the highest quality, strive to improve our products, and continuously develop new products that provide greater protection in the laboratory.

### 2 Strict Safety Standards

We hold ourselves to the highest standard and adhere to the strict AFNOR NF X 15-211: 2009 filtration safety standard as endorsed by ANSI Z9.5-2012.

### 3 A Published Chemical Listing

It all begins here. Without this listing, we are not compliant with AFNOR NFX 15-211. Our in-house laboratory tests, as well as independent testing, to verify the retention capacity of over 700 chemicals for our filters.

### 4 Independent Testing

Eriab filters have been independently tested multiple times at various concentrations guaranteeing that our safety solutions all adhere to the strict performance criteria of the AFNOR NF X 15-211:2009 standard assuring that the emission concentration at the filter exhaust will always be lower than 1% of the TLV.

### 5 Application Questionnaire (Valiquet)

Our laboratory specialists will recommend the appropriate filtration fume hood, type of filter, and personalized advice.

### 6 Certificate of Validation for the chemicals used in the hood

A certified PhD chemist issues a Certificate of Validation with a list of the chemicals approved for use in the hood.

### 7 Our Safety Program

We back up our products 100%. This program includes your specialized chemical evaluation, validation of your hood upon installation, and a filtration safety specialist at your service to ensure that your hood is operating to its full potential.

France  
+33 (0) 2 32 09 55 80 | ventes@erlab.net

United States  
+1 800-964-4434 | captairsales@erlab.com

China  
+86 (0) 512 5781 4085 | sales.china@erlab.com.cn

Spain  
+34 936 732 474  
export.south@erlab.net

Germany  
0800 330 47 31 | export.north@erlab.net

United Kingdom  
+44 (0) 1722 341 940 | export.north@erlab.net

Italy  
+39 (0) 2 89 00 771 | export.south@erlab.net

  
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