

Safety and Ventilation for Woodworkers

Done and dusted Peter Roper clears the air with Record's DX 5000 Dust Extractor. Anyone who has ever placed an operating router to a piece of wood will know just how much dust can be thrown out from the extractor port. Apart from making the average workshop resemble a Christmas snow scene in just a few minutes, this dust can be a veritable health hazard - especially if the material being machined is hardwood or man-made board such as MDF. A dust extractor is, therefore, an essential piece of workshop equipment.

"But", I here you enquire, "which type of dust extractor should I use?" There are many on the market. Some are very efficient at collecting all the dust particles, while others still leave the workshop looking like it's shrouded in early morning mist. As a general rule you should buy the best possible that you can afford - after all you only get one life, so you should treat it with the utmost respect. If you are a serious routing enthusiast, it is more than likely that you have more in your workshop than just one router - maybe a planer/thicknesser, bandsaw, lathe or even a table saw.

If this is the case then you might like to consider investing a few hundred pounds in the wall mounted DX 5000 dust extractor from Record. Measuring just over 1m in height with a diameter of 485mm this is a very efficient unit and, what's more, weighing in at a modest 18kg you don't need rippling muscles to install it. You also don't need a degree in engineering to fix the bracket to the wall. Four suitably sized wood screws and four conventional plastic fixing plugs are all that are required. Indeed, the DX 5000 is simplicity itself to assemble and install. Including drilling the wall, installation should not take much more than 40 minutes from unpacking the box to operation.

It is worth pointing out at this point that the model comes complete with 2m of 102mm diameter flexible hose, which is intended mainly for connection to woodworking machinery to collect sawdust and shavings. If you have a number of woodworking machines around your workshop that you will require connecting to the extractor, you will need to fix up a pipe network. My tip is to use 100mm drainage pipes, which are readily available from builders' merchants' or from major home improvement outlets. Various shape bends or 'Y' joints are produced and the pipes are simply pushed together - a tight seal is provided by neoprene gaskets installed in the sockets.

Check the availability of wall fixing brackets before you decide to buy - I recently trawled around half a dozen merchant branches before being able to find one that could supply just four. I can imagine what you are saying at this point! "If the extractor and pipework is 102mm in diameter, how can I fix it up to my router that only has a 32mm connection port?" Well the answer is quite simple. The people at Record have, as an optional extra a 102 to 32mm diameter reducer plus a very handy 2m of 32mm diameter flexible hosing.

This is ideal for connecting to a router and other hand-held power tools such as jigsaws or sanders. The 32mm flexible hose also doubles as an ideal and convenient cleaning attachment for vacuuming around the workshop floor, although the unit does come with a plastic, bevel-ended nozzle for fitting inside the end of the main 102mm hose. The DX 5000 is fitted with two very powerful 1000-watt motors for efficient extraction of dust and wood shavings and I must admit the suction is more than adequate for the purpose.

It also features a high dust filtration system, which consists of a cloth filter in addition to cartridge filters and outer, disposable paper filter bags. These paper filters are particularly effective in collecting the fine dust, which is regarded by experts as being the most hazardous to health. This is the fine dust created when routing or sanding materials such as hardwoods and MDF. Another important aspect of the extractor is the fact that it is relatively quiet in operation. The noise emission level is less than 85dB(A), which in real terms means that your neighbours are unlikely to complain about the constant droning sound emanating from your workshop, and you are unlikely to develop hearing problems.

Another plus with the machine is the polythene collecting sack that fits around the cage of the body, under a restraining strap. This holds a massive 200 litres of dust, which means the extractor does not have to be emptied every couple of hours. Overall, the DX 5000 is a versatile and adaptable dust extractor that would benefit any size of workshop, provided it was kitted out with a number of woodworking machines, such as a planer/thicknesser, lathe, bandsaw or benchsaw.

I would have no hesitation in recommending any router enthusiast to put this one down their Christmas present list.

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About the Author

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