

SILICA - IT'S NOT JUST DUST

Toolbox Talk



WHY IT MATTERS

- Respirable crystalline silica is a serious occupational hazard found in many common construction and fabrication materials.
- Exposure can lead to permanent, disabling, and fatal diseases, including silicosis and lung cancer
- Many high-risk tasks can create dangerously high levels of silica dust - often without visible signs

WHAT IS CYRSTALLINE SILICA

- A naturally occurring mineral found in concrete, stone, brick, mortar, tile and sand
- Engineered stone products can contain up to 93-95% silica, makes them extremely hazardous during cutting or fabrication
- Types include quartz, cristobalite, and tridymite - all harmful when inhaled.

WHERE IS IT FOUND

- Sand, stone, granite, concrete, brick, mortar
- Artificial stone countertops (quartz)
- Consumer products containing amorphous silica such as cosmetics, cleaners, and silica gel
- Film production materials like Fuller's Earth and FX/Movie Dirt

HEALTH HAZARDS

- Long-term inhalation of respirable crystalline silica can cause:
 - Silicosis (incurable, sometimes fatal lung disease)
 - Lung cancer
 - Chronic bronchitis & respiratory disease
 - Kidney disease and renal failure

PROTECTIVE CONTROLS

- Use required controls to reduce exposure:
 - Wet cutting/drilling every time
 - Local exhaust ventilation and HEPA extraction
 - Establishing regulated areas for high dust operations
 - Proper respiratory protection when engineering controls cannot reduce exposure below limits.

SILICA ISN'T JUST DUST - USE WET METHODS, PROPER VENTILATION, AND RESPIRATORS TO PROTECT YOUR LUNGS FOR LIFE