



SILICA DUST KILLS

NO EXCUSES, FIX THE PROBLEM

According to the Cancer Council each year approximately 600,000 Australians are exposed to respirable crystalline silica (silica) dust at work.

Each year approximately 350 Australians contract silicosis and 230 people are estimated to be diagnosed with lung cancer because of being exposed to silica dust in the workplace.

What is silica and is it dangerous?

Silica is a natural mineral that is found in sand, stone, rock, aggregates, granite, mortar, marble, concrete, shale, slate, and sandstone.

When these materials are worked on, small dust particles that cannot be seen by the naked eye are released into the air and when inhaled it can cause irreversible damage to the lungs, including silicosis (dubbed the new asbestosis).



Authorised by Daniel Walton, National Secretary



Is your workplace safe from silica dust?

Air monitoring and ventilation

YES NO

Workers are not exposed to dust/silica dust in excess of the Workplace Exposure Standard (WES) of 0.05mg/m³ (average of 8hrs working day) or 0.042mg/m³ (averaged over 12hrs over 4 days).

☐ ☐

Workplace exposure monitoring for dust/silica dust is regularly undertaken to verify that workplace controls are effective in maintaining workers exposures to dust/silica dust below the WES.

☐ ☐

Ventilation/extraction systems are in place and working.

☐ ☐

How does your employer check to ensure they are working properly?

PPE

Workers respiratory protection is fitted and worn in accordance with AS/NZS 1715.

☐ ☐



Training

YES NO

Workers receive training with respect to the health risks associated with dust/silica dust in their workplace, as well as how to minimise exposure to silica dust.

☐ ☐

Amenities

Separate clean amenities room is provided for food preparation and eating.

☐ ☐

Work laundry is provided for dusty clothes.

☐ ☐

Health monitoring

The employer conducts health monitoring such as (1) CT scan every 5 years, (2) occupational history exposure record and review every 12 months and (3) respiratory (breathing/lung) function test every 12 months to identify signs and symptoms of workplace exposure to dust/silica dust.

☐ ☐

Contact your union delegate/HSR or organiser if your workplace does not meet the above minimum standards.





Who is at risk?

If you do one of these jobs, you are at a risk of silica dust exposure:

- Road construction
- Moving earth – excavating, mining, quarrying, tunnelling or tiling
- Manufacture of glass, ceramics, brick, concrete, tile or metals
- Cutting, grinding, sanding and polishing stone bench tops
- Cement manufacture
- Sand blasting or casting
- Clean-up activities such as dry sweeping or pressurised air blowing of concrete or sand dust

Scan the QR code for more information.

**Maurice
Blackburn**
Lawyers
Since 1919

