

# Silica dust: what you can't see can hurt you

Cutting, grinding, drilling or crushing concrete, brick, stone and some other materials can release very fine dust that goes deep into the lungs. Long-term exposure can cause serious lung disease, including silicosis and lung cancer.

## Key points

- Employers must assess the risk and have an exposure control plan where workers may be exposed to respirable crystalline silica.
- Controls come first at the source: wet cutting, tools with dust capture, enclosures and ventilation. A respirator is the last line, not the first.
- Workers must be instructed and trained in the hazards and in the controls for their task.
- Do not dry-sweep or use compressed air to clean off dust. Use wet methods or a suitable HEPA vacuum.
- Keep dusty work clothes out of your vehicle and home where practicable, and wash up before eating or drinking.
- If you wear a respirator, it must be the right type, fit-tested and used correctly.

## Ask the crew

- Which tasks today make dust, and how are we controlling it at the source?
- Is the water supply or dust capture working on each tool?
- Who is fit-tested for the respirators on this job?

## Where this comes from

OHS Regulation, ss. 6.110 to 6.115.1 (respirable crystalline silica), including 6.112.1 and 6.112.7 (Part 6 Substance Specific Requirements) <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/occupational-health-safety/searchable-ohs-regulation/ohs-regulation/part-06-substance-specific-requirements>

Your site's own procedures and the equipment manufacturer's instructions always apply. This sheet is general information, not legal advice.

## Sign-off sheet

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Presented by: \_\_\_\_\_

| Name (print) | Signature | Date |
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