

Silica Dust

Silica is one of the most common minerals found in the earth's crust. Glass, beach sand, silicone and granite all contain silica.

There are two forms of silica. Crystalline and non-crystalline.

Crystalline is the bigger concern of the two for health reasons. The most common form of crystalline silica is quartz. Quartz can be found in sand, gravel, clay, granite and many other forms of rock

Non crystalline silica is found in glass, silicone carbide and silicone.

Workers can be exposed to silica when cutting, grinding, drilling mixing and demolishing materials that could contain silica. The size of the silica particles determines the amount of risk. When silica particles become airborne the smaller particles (silica dust) can be inhaled deep into the lungs where they can cause damage.



How to prevent exposure to silica dust

- Replace materials, may not always be possible, but substituting materials is the obvious choice if applicable
- Avoid wearing work clothes at home, clothing can trap a lot of silica dust. Don't carry it with you to your home.
- Use water sprays, keeping materials wet is a good way to keep silica dust down when cutting.
- Use LEV. Local exhaust ventilation vacuums up the dust closest to the source and helps eliminate the particles becoming airborne.
- Don't eat or drink around silica. Dust can settle on hands and be transferred if you don't wash them before eating or drinking.
- Wear a respirator. Like all PPE wearing a respirator should be used as a last resort if you can not avoid being exposed to levels of silica by controlling other factors.

**Always protect your
lungs!!**