

Silicosis— Is your work place safe?



opira.com.au



Controlled
Environments
Accreditation
No.15597

Respirable dusts containing crystalline silica pose a greater than average health risk, causing fibrosis, scarring and even cancer of the lung.

While dust is everywhere, respirable dust is physically smaller—less than 10 microns in diameter. This dangerous size can penetrate in to the deep alveolar region of the lung where gas exchange occurs.

Silicosis is the condition of scarring of the lung tissue, causing shortness of breath, coughing and chest pain.

This disease has a very long latency period, with symptoms sometimes taking several decades to develop. Not all workers exposed to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) will develop respiratory disease. It is therefore prudent to ensure exposures to RCS are minimised.

Where can silica be found?

Silica is in quartz, sand, stone, soil, granite, brick, cement, grout, mortar, bitumen and engineered stone products.

What kinds of workplaces and processes expose workers?

Silica is widely encountered in extractive industries—in the

manufacture of many concrete based building materials as well as widespread use in manufacturing processes. The number of Queensland workers potentially exposed is large.

Typical leading industries include:

- ▶ Tunnelling
- ▶ Foundries
- ▶ Stonemasonry
- ▶ Cement manufacturing
- ▶ Power generation
- ▶ Brick and tile manufacturing
- ▶ Ceramics
- ▶ Construction, including granite grinding and polishing
- ▶ Metal polishing
- ▶ Architectural abrasive blasting



THE NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMISSION REDUCED THE WORKPLACE EXPOSURE LIMIT FOR RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA (RCS) IN 2004 TO 0.1 MG/M³.

THIS HAS BEEN ADOPTED BY THE WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATION (2011).

- ▶ Quarrying; and
- ▶ Mining

Find out whether your workplace is affected

If you work in the listed industries you need to know if your occupational exposure is safe. Opira conducts monitoring of silica and other environmental pollutants and can advise on the best way to ensure your air quality is safe and your workers and business stay healthy.

OPIRA BRISBANE
(HEAD OFFICE)

32 DIVIDEND ST
MANSFIELD
Q 4122

CONTACT OPIRA NOW
07 3414 5514
SOLUTIONS@OPIRA.COM.AU


ENVIRONMENT RISK MANAGEMENT