

SILICOSIS

New guidance material on minimising the risk of exposure to silica dust

In collaboration with stakeholders, industry, and union partners, SafeWork SA has published new guidance on managing the risks of silica dust across the construction industry.

Crystalline silica is a natural mineral found in construction materials such as concrete, bricks, tiles, Hebel, mortar, and engineered stone. When these materials are ground, cut, drilled, sanded, loaded, or demolished, inhaling the dust can cause deadly lung and respiratory diseases such as silicosis.

The guidance material includes information on:

- what causes exposure
- health effects
- how to control exposure risks
- implementing engineering controls
- respiratory protective equipment (RPE)
- information, instruction, and training
- Safe Work Method Statements
- the duties of principal contractors on construction projects.

To assist the construction industry in minimising the risk of occupational exposure, SafeWork SA is supporting the South Australian Construction Safety Alliance (SACSA) respirable crystalline silica initiative.

SACSA has developed a [safety essential flyer](#) containing information to minimise risks of exposure to respirable crystalline silica that will be shared and posted at their members worksites.

SafeWork SA Executive Director, Martyn Campbell said “proper protection from exposure is a lot more than just wearing a dust mask, which alone, provides minimal protection. Engineering controls have become more accessible in recent times and are reasonably practicable to use in many cases; compliance with the regulations can be achieved through the application of basic, well-known exposure controls”.

For more information, see: [Respirable crystalline silica in construction and demolition work](#).