

Silica exposure health risk for engineered stone benchtop workers

Your rights to workers' compensation

If you work with engineered stone benchtops you may have had exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS). Exposure to RCS can cause very serious and debilitating health effects including silicosis.

If you are concerned about silicosis or you are experiencing respiratory symptoms, visit your doctor to discuss your concerns. You should also talk to your employer about health monitoring at your workplace.

If you have an illness that is from the work that you do, you have the right to compensation. This applies if you are currently working or retired.

If your doctor issues a medical certificate that indicates you may have a work related respiratory disease, you can make a workers' compensation claim.

Staff at WorkCover Queensland will step you through the application process and the information needed to make a decision on your claim. They will assist with making appointments for necessary medical examinations, which may involve a chest x-ray, spirometry and assessment by appropriate medical specialists (e.g. a respiratory physician), with accessing support services (including counselling), and in navigating the claims process.

If your workers' compensation claim is accepted, you may receive compensation for:

- lost wages
- medical, surgical and hospital expenses
- necessary chest x-rays, scans and medical tests
- rehabilitation treatment and equipment services including pulmonary rehabilitation if required
- travel expenses for tests, scans, counselling or rehabilitation appointments.

As part of your compensation, you may also be entitled to:

- tailored return to work assistance that may include vocational assessments, host employment opportunities, training courses and formal job seeking training (e.g. computer skills courses, resume assistance, networking skills)
- lump sum compensation payments for your injury, including additional payments if you are diagnosed with an occupational lung disease caused by the inhalation of respirable dust (e.g. silicosis) or a terminal respiratory disease.

You may also be able to sue your employer and claim damages if you can prove your employer was negligent.

Appeals

If your application for compensation is rejected, you may seek a review of this decision with the Office of Industrial Relations. A further right of appeal is available to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

Take action

For more information on your workers' compensation rights, or to lodge your claim phone **1300 362 128** or use the online claim form at **[worksafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au)**.