

4. Carry out health monitoring

You must provide health monitoring to workers who are using, handling, generating or storing materials containing crystalline silica and there is a significant risk to their health from exposure to RCS.

Refer to Safe Work Australia's guidance for more detailed information on health monitoring.

For businesses in the stone benchtop industry, the *Managing respirable crystalline silica dust exposure in the stone benchtop industry Code of Practice 2019* sets out the minimum standards that must be met with regard to health monitoring. Failure to meet these standards will result in enforcement action.

To find out more about workplace exposure standards for respirable crystalline silica and effective control measures visit [worksafe.qld.gov.au](https://www.worksafe.qld.gov.au), phone **1300 362 128** or email safe@oir.qld.gov.au

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Reduction in workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica

For businesses and workers to minimise risks when working with silica

Reduction in workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica

The national workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica has been halved from an eight hour time-weighted average airborne concentration of 0.1 milligrams per cubic metre (mg/m³) to 0.05 mg/m³. This new workplace exposure standard takes effect in Queensland from 1 July 2020.

What does this mean for you?

You must manage worker exposure to dust and meet your existing duties and obligations under Queensland work health and safety legislation.

This means:

- using higher order controls (including elimination, engineering, isolation and substitution)
- air monitoring
- health monitoring
- training for workers
- providing workers with respiratory protection where needed.

Health risks of exposure to silica dust

Respirable crystalline silica dust is so fine you usually can't see it—it can stay airborne for long periods of time and be easily inhaled deep into the lungs. Breathing in respirable crystalline silica dust can cause serious lung diseases including silicosis and lung cancer as well as chronic renal disease and autoimmune disorders.



Make improvements to dust controls

1. Control the dust

Existing work health and safety laws in Queensland prohibit dry cutting or dry processing of materials with crystalline silica. Dry processing activities (e.g. drilling, polishing, cutting, trimming, grinding) can expose workers to levels of respirable crystalline silica that exceed the workplace exposure standard of 0.05 mg/m³.

Stop dust at its source

- Use products with a lower crystalline silica content.
- Use enclosed equipment.
- Use water suppression methods in combination with spray/mist guards.
- Use on-tool dust extraction.

Remove dust from the air

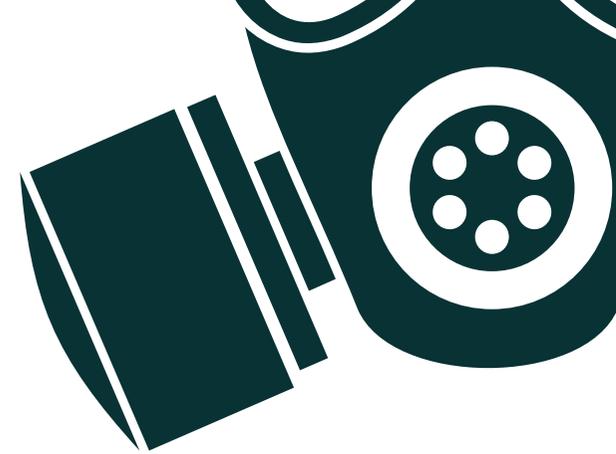
- Use a dust capture hood/local exhaust ventilation and carry out daily pre-start checks.
- Carry out daily start-up checks.

Stop dust from spreading

- Enclose a dusty process in a booth or enclosure e.g. abrasive blasting cabinet or glove box.
- Clean up regularly, with a H Class vacuum, wet methods or low-pressure water. Note: M class vacuum cleaners can be used in the construction industry.
- Dispose of wet dust slurry before it dries out in a way that minimises the risk of dust being redistributed over the workplace (e.g. covered, kept wet, bagged).

Protect workers

- Fully enclose operator cabins or control rooms.
- Pressurise fixed and mobile operator cabins, and control rooms.



2. Wear the right respirator

Choosing and wearing the right respirator for the job is essential to protect your workers' health. Make sure workers:

- choose a respirator that is suitable for the level of dust in the air
- wear a respirator that is fitted with at least a P1 or P2 filter
- powered air-purifying respirators are required for stone benchtop fabrication and installation under the *Managing respirable crystalline silica dust exposure in the stone benchtop industry Code of Practice 2019*.

Refer to the fit-testing requirements for tight-fitting respirators brochure for more information.

3. Carry out air monitoring

If you are not sure if the airborne concentration of respirable crystalline silica exceeds the workplace exposure standard you must carry out air monitoring.

For businesses in the stone benchtop industry, the *Managing respirable crystalline silica dust exposure in the stone benchtop industry Code of Practice 2019* sets out the minimum standards that must be met with regard to air monitoring. Failure to meet these standards will result in enforcement action.