

CRYSTALLINE SILICA INFORMATION SHEET – QUARTZITE

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QUARTZITE CRYSTALLINE SILICA CONTENT RANGE EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN 98%

HANDLING

This product may present a hazard if mechanically processed.

Crystalline silica dust is generated when this product is mechanically processed, for example, through cutting or grinding. These dust particles are small enough to be breathed deep into the lungs.

Exposure to crystalline silica dust over a long period of time at low to moderate levels, or short periods at high levels, can lead to serious health conditions such as silicosis. Silicosis is an irreversible, incurable and progressive lung disease that can lead to disability and death.

In its solid form this product is safe to store and handle.

Disposal to be in accordance with local council and EPA waste requirements.

EXPOSURE STANDARDS

Safe Work Australia publishes exposure standards for airborne contaminants in the workplace.

Under the OHS Regulations, employers must ensure employees are not exposed to respirable crystalline silica dust at the workplace at a level above the exposure standard.

The exposure standard for crystalline silica dust, listed under Quartz, Cristobalite, Tridymite, Tripoli (respirable dust), is 0.05mg/m³ as a time-weighted average (TWA) airborne concentration over 8 hours.

An 8-hour TWA exposure standard is the maximum average airborne concentration of a particular substance permitted over an 8-hour working day, for a 5-day working week. Where a workplace has working hours that exceed an 8-hour day or a 40-hour week, the TWA needs to be adjusted to compensate for the greater exposure. The adjusted exposure standard for crystalline silica dust over a 10-hour day would be 0.035mg/m³.

The workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica is based on the airborne concentration within a person's breathing zone, outside of any respiratory protective equipment that may be in use.

DISPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

Disposal to be in accordance with local council and EPA waste requirements.

EXPOSURE CONTROLS

On tool water suppression is one of the most effective ways to reduce exposure to dust. Water suppression uses water at the point of dust generation to dampen or suppress dust before it is released into the air. This is an effective control when the resultant slurry is managed and cleaned up in a manner that does not generate dust. Slurry needs to be managed so it does not dry out.

Another effective way to reduce exposure to dust is to use on tool dust extraction, which removes the dust from the source as it is being produced. An on tool dust extraction system needs to:

- be fitted directly onto the tool, and
- be connected to a Dust Class M or H vacuum or another system that captures any dust generated by the power tool (when the unit is full, it must be emptied in a controlled manner that does not release airborne dust).

Local exhaust ventilation (LEV) – if the above methods are not reasonably practicable.

PERSONAL PROTECTION

Use Respiratory Protection.

Respiratory Protection used must be designed to protect the wearer from the inhalation of airborne contaminants and comply with AS/NZS 1716:2012 - Respiratory protective devices or an equivalent standard.

RPE needs to have at least a P2 filter. RPE that requires a facial seal, such as half-face respirators, should not be used by people with beards or facial stubble. Where facial hair interferes with the fit of the RPE, a powered air purifying respirator (PAPR) that does not rely on a facial seal needs to be used, such as a PAPR loose-fitting helmet.

HOUSE KEEPING

Use of a hazardous dust Class M or H vacuum

Low-pressure hosing

Wet mopping, squeegeeing

Wet wiping down surfaces

Work areas are to be regularly cleaned to ensure there is no build-up of crystalline silica dust

Ensure clean-up and housekeeping processes do not spread or release dust into the air

If the slurry is allowed to dry, the waste needs to be bagged and sealed before it is disposed of

If recycled or recirculated water filtration systems are used, the water must be adequately treated to allow crystalline silica and other dust particles to be removed from the water before it is reused