

Prevent exposure to silica dust

Where designers cannot design out cutting, drilling or chasing the PC should be made aware of the extent and put proactive site measures in place.

Risk assessments must adequately assess the exposure of a person to silica dust. In cases when it is reasonable to expect dust levels to be significant, atmospheric sampling will be required.

As a general rule levels greater than 0.1mg/m³ can be regarded as significant and will require monitoring.

Risk Assessments must be set out in detail the manner in which the control measures are to be monitored, supervised and maintained.

First of all, try to eliminate silica dust from the work altogether, i.e. use a block splitter instead of a cut off saw to cut blocks. If silica cannot be eliminated, exposure must be minimised.

- Respirable silica dust release must be controlled using dust suppression techniques, local exhaust ventilation, or totally enclose the work area.
- Stone cutting abrasive wheels must be fitted with a water suppression system.
- Respiratory protective equipment must also be worn in addition to any suppression technique. For the dustiest processes, positive pressure or airline breathing apparatus must be utilised.
- Correct RPE (minimum level is FFP2) must be worn. Refer to Eye, Ear, Respiratory Protection
- All users must be trained, face fit tested, and checked by activity supervisors.
- Segregation / Zoning / Signage must be displayed as per Hazard exclusion.

