



Safety Alert

Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union

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SILICA DUST BTA POLICY

Chasing

1. Respirators

- A Powered Air Purifier Respirator (PAPR) is sufficient. When using these respirators they should be used for one and a half hours on and half hour off.
- Thorough training should be carried out on sites to ensure effective usage. This training should involve:
 - Personal fit
 - Explanation as to why the respirator has to be worn
 - How to change filters
 - Maintenance cleaning after each shift)
 - How to change batteries
 - Personal issue requirements

2. Masonry Saws Procedure

- For the chasing process masonry saw with solid plate and hinge entry is to be used and fitted with a spring loaded dust skirt to prevent the escape of silica dust.
- The saw must be attached to a separately powered industrial vacuum cleaner filtered with a filter bag.
- Chasing can only be carried out when all other workers are cleared out of the area so as to not allow incidental exposure to dust. In the event that this cannot be arranged chasing is to be carried out outside of normal working hours to a maximum of four hours (one and a half hours on and half hour off) per day.
- Persons can reserve the right to refuse to perform chasing operations.
- Disposable coveralls (with hood) to be supplied to all operators involved in the chasing process (with appropriate supplies on site).
- Showers on site to be available.
- All equipment being used is to be maintained in a good condition and spare respirator filters and batteries to be available on site.

Cleaning Process

- a) At the completion of all processes persons should ensure that they are thoroughly vacuumed down prior to removing the respirator.
- b) Any clean up process shall not commence within 30 minutes of the chasing operation. Air space during this time must be left undisturbed.
- c) All cleaning of work areas is to be through vacuuming (dust is to be placed in a bag sealed and clearly marked) and those persons carrying out the vacuum process will be protected as if performing the chasing process.

3. Chest X-Rays

- Persons who have been exposed for more than two years to the chasing process to be the first off-site to the Perth Chest Clinic to be x-rayed and have a lung function test carried out.
- All chest x-rays will be classified according to the I.L.O Pneumoconiosis Classification.
- The central x-ray storage is to be held at the Perth Chest Clinic, access to be arranged for Dr Must (Department of Respiratory Medicine) SCGH following union approval.
- Any application by bona-fide researches to gain access to x-ray records shall only be by approval of construction unions.
- Unions to notify Perth Chest Clinic of this position.

4. Register of Workers

A register of workers' history is to be drawn up with identification from employers both in the cottage industry and on major construction sites, as recognition of being exposed to silica. In gathering the records necessary the following guidelines set out the information necessary for future use.

- a) Identification:
Name, Address, Date of Birth, Worker's Classification.
- b) Brief resume of work history.
- c) Exposure to silica dust (time span, type of jobs causing exposure, approximate time per day or per week, the type of process used which generates silica dust).
- d) History of chest illness (when, what etc).
- e) If possible – details of smoking history, if any.

5. Drilling (Overhead horizontal and Drilling into Floors)

Initial results of tests carried out on overhead drilling show that respirable silica levels are significantly lower than for chasing and grinding. In determining the degree of protection required, consideration of the many variables must be given.

- i) Length of time per day spent drilling.
- ii) Diameter and depth of holes to be drilled.
- iii) Material to be drilled, composition and age.
- iv) Position of hole e.g. Up, down or horizontal.

- v) Position of persons head in relation to the hole drill.
- vi) Location e.g. well or poorly ventilated area.
- vii) Air movement in immediate vicinity.
- viii) Whether dust extractor systems are being used.
- ix) Speed of drill used can vary the cutting speed of the drill bit and may affect the respirable dust generated.

- For the drilling process a full face respirator with a replaceable P1 filter must be worn.
- Appropriate training with regard to fit, why it has to be worn, maintenance and cleaning will be carried out (see training provisions PAPR unit).
- Persons with beards cannot wear these respirators.
- No other person is to be in the immediate vicinity unless protected approximately.
- Some classifications and classes of workers can be exposed to different levels of respirable dust.

6. Interim Measures for All Other Processes

All other processes in the industry regarded as dusty work are to receive in the interim the protection provided by the full face respirator giving 100 times protection.

7. Grinding

- a) A PAPR is to be used as a minimum protection for an operator undertaking dry wall grinding.

A full face respirator is to be used for wet grinding.

- b) Floor Grinding:

Pending further investigation, floor grinding should be undertaken wet. A full face respirator shall be used.

8. Sweeping

A well maintained and approved mechanical sweeper can be operated without the necessity for operators to wear respiratory protection. A P3 disposable mask should be available to any person requesting them.

For other general sweeping duties the use of the watered down method, wet shavings or saw dust are to be used. Those people performing the sweeping operations should use P3 disposable mask.

Sweeping in confined spaces such as small rooms or stairwells should be done using a half face cartridge mask P3.

9. Brick Cutting (Bench Saws)

- Refer to CFMEU Policy on brick saws.

Report unsafe sites and safety procedures call 9221 1055 Text 0419 812 861