

SILICA DUST – RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA

A GUIDE FOR HOUSEHOLDERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC – MAY 2026

PREPARED BY: DR SCOTT McGIBBON

RESIDENT SILICA AWARENESS OFR CONSTRUCITON EXCELLENCE (SAFE) GUIDE

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Silica Dust: A guide for householders and the general public

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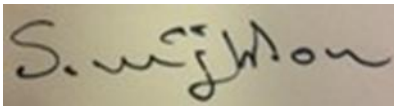
FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce this newly developed guide for the public on health risks associated with silica dust, especially during housing repairs, maintenance and improvements.

My strong advice is that householders should engage experienced contractors and professionals to undertake home renovations where silica dust is likely to be present and/or to undertake silica dust removal.

There is no safe level of exposure to silica dust exposure.

Where householders do make the decision to undertake home renovations where silica dust is, or maybe present, this guide provides useful information to minimise the associated risks.



Dr Scott McGibbon

Director – Ptotal Consultancy

CIOB Fellow

Member, Construction Industry Advisory Committee (CONIAC) - Tackling Ill-Health

Fellow of The Institute of Innovation and Knowledge Exchange (IKE Institute)



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Silica Dust – a guide for householders and the wider public (referred to here as ‘the guide’) is a risk management document, designed to assist householders reduce the risks associated with exposure to silica dust, known as Respirable Crystalline Silica (referred to here as ‘RCS’). It was developed by Dr Scott McGibbon, in consultation with technical experts and input from the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB).

The guide was developed in response to the increasing number of non-occupational incidences of silica dust related diseases along with a growing volume of individual householders’ enquiries received by local and regional environmental health units in relation to silica dust identification and management. It was developed over 18 months including focus group testing and consultation. The scientific information in the guide is based on earlier Health and Safety Executive publications available on the HSE website - <https://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/healthrisks/index.htm>

The human health effects from exposure to silica dust are well documented. In this guide, the likelihood of developing a silica dust related disease from breathing in RCS is called the ‘risk’. The risk of developing silica dust related disease, like silicosis, from RCS exposure is associated with the level and duration of exposure, length of time since first exposure, the particle size, and concurrent exposure to tobacco smoke and other carcinogens.

Not all factors are well understood, and we do not yet know why some people develop a silica dust related disease and others do not; however, the risk increases with the exposure to silica dust particles.

KEY POINTS

- Inhaling silica dust particles may cause silica dust related disease and death.
- Most houses built are likely to contain silica-based products.
- The health risk of undisturbed silica-based products in the home is very low.
- Householders should engage experienced contractors and professionals to undertake renovations, adaptations and upgrades
- Householders who choose to do their own renovation or ‘DIY’ work should follow the advice provided in this guide carefully to reduce the health risk to them and their families to a very low level.

This guide recommends householders to engage experienced contractors and professionals to undertake home renovations but acknowledges that some people will choose to do their own renovations.

The guide therefore contains information to help householders make decisions about the risks associated with exposure to silica-based materials in their home. It also contains practical information to lower the risks of exposure; however, if in doubt, always seek assistance from a silica dust professional.

INTRODUCTION

This guide has been prepared for householders. It describes the risks to your health from being exposed to silica dust particles. It explains who is at risk and how to reduce exposure to yourself, your family and others. It also contains basic information on identifying and dealing with silica-based products.

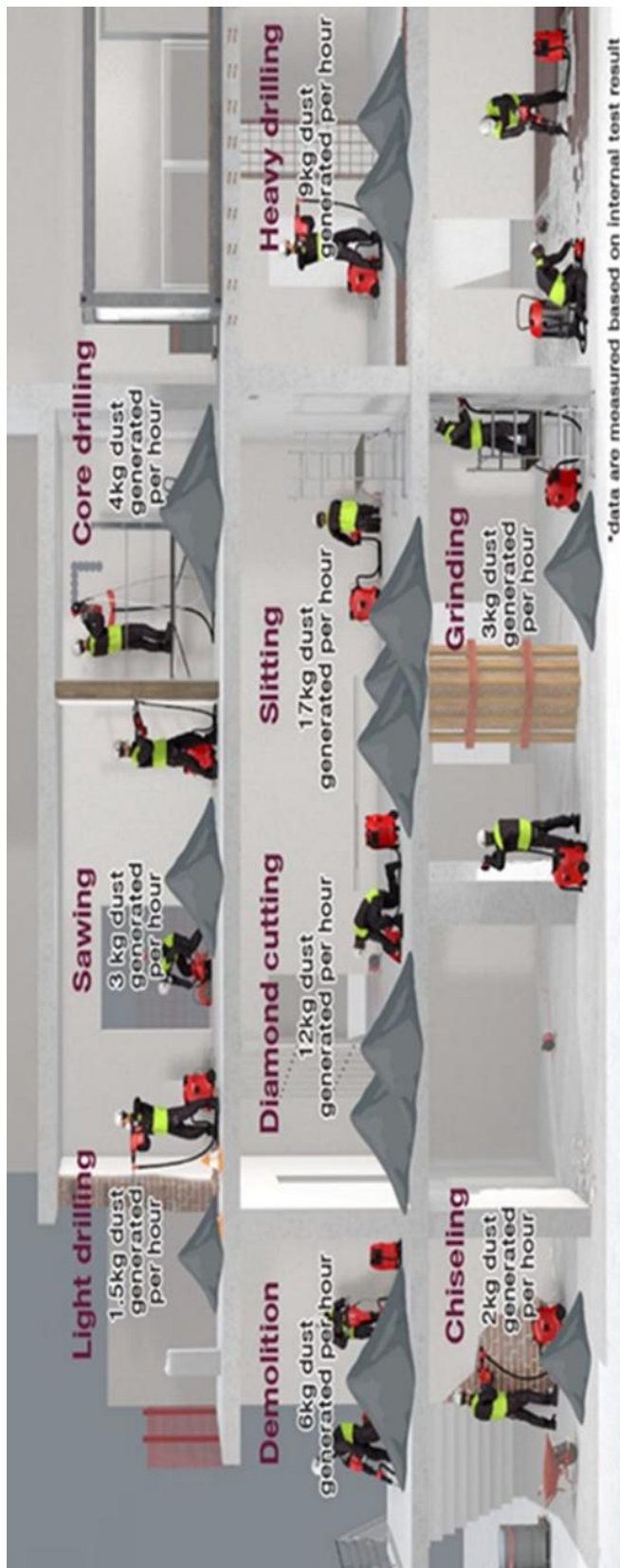
Silicon (Si) is the second most common element in the Earth's crust (oxygen is the most common). The compound silica, also known as silicon dioxide (SiO₂), is formed from silicon and oxygen atoms. Silica occurs in 3 forms: crystalline, microcrystalline (or cryptocrystalline) and amorphous (non-crystalline). Crystalline silica is found widely in stone, rocks, sands and clays. Construction products often contain crystalline silica (see Table 1 below) and in many situations it is difficult to eliminate or substitute.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/guidance/cnseries.htm>

Table 1 – Respirable Crystalline Silica concentrations in common materials

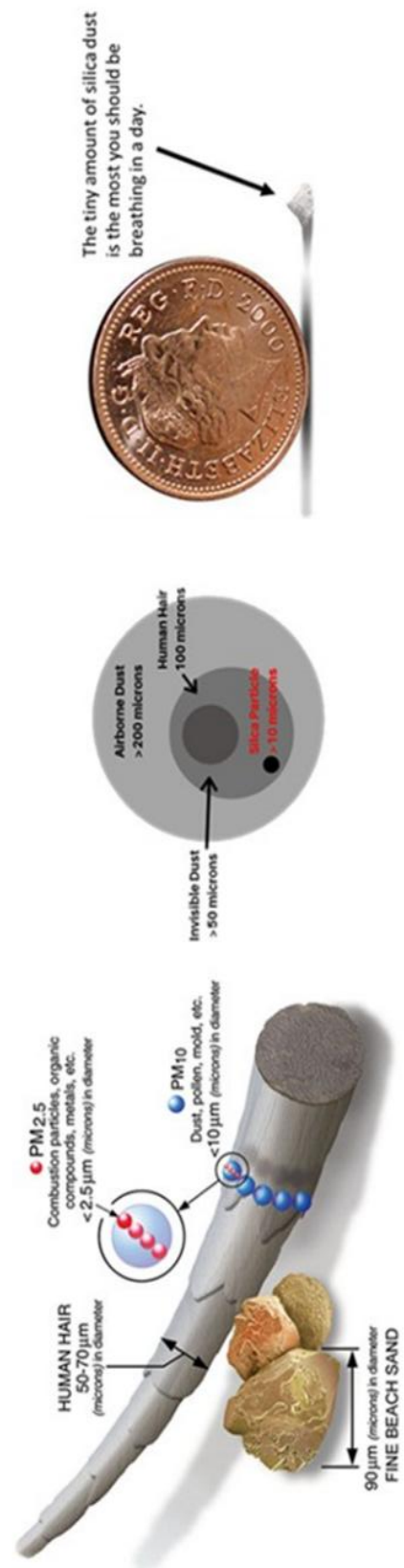
Types of common construction mineral-based materials	Crystalline silica content (% w/w)
Silica containing composites, e.g. manufactured stone	Up to 95%
Sandstone, gritstone, quartzite	70% - 90%
Aggregates, mortar, concrete	25 - 70%
Engineered stone	45 - 95%
Autoclaved aerated concrete	20 - 40%
Brick	Typically less than 20%
Slate	20 - 40%
Ceramic/ porcelain tiles	5 - 45%
Joint compounds	5 - 10%
Fibre cement	20 - 60%
Plaster/Plasterboard	4 - 6%
Paint	1 - 6%

Silica based products have been commonly used in residential, commercial and industrial settings for centuries. Many houses, whether built in the last decade or the last century, contain silica-based materials, especially in walls (internal and external), internal and external wall cladding (plaster, plasterboard etc), worktops, ceilings and patios. It is also used a filler for grouts, binding agents, joint compounds and paint products as well as in some plastics and industrial cleaners. While everyone is likely to be surrounded by silica within the home at some point – RCS by itself is inert and completely safe - simply walking into a building made of stone or concrete or brick is by no means enough to put you at risk of the dangers.



CLEAN AIR. CLEAR LUNGS.

Not all workplace hazards are visible.



The image above on shows the many construction activities around the home that can generate RCS (silica dust)

Outdoor and Indoor Environments

Clean air is essential to public health, yet construction projects — whether large-scale or home-based — often compromise air quality. Exposure risks to silica dust happen more than you think. While contractors may be aware of its risks, homeowners and DIY enthusiasts are often exposed without realising it.

For example, have you ever tackled home renovation and ended up covered in dust?

Imagine this: It's a sunny weekend, and you're finally tackling that long-overdue tile job in the kitchen. The angle grinder hums, debris falls, and a light haze floats through the sunlight. It looks harmless.

That fine, powdery substance in the air might seem risk-free, but if it contains silica, it's far from just an annoying mess — it's a serious health hazard. It operates in both plain sight and invisible sight and could affect your health without you even knowing.



Whether you're a homeowner who has hired a seasoned contractor or a weekend DIY warrior or even living next to the ongoing work, understanding what silica dust is, how silica dust exposure potentially impacts your health is essential for protecting your health and the air quality of your surroundings.

It is crucial that all housing residents understand how they might be affected so that they can take steps to reduce the risk. For the purpose of this guide, housing refers either to a bedsit, flat or house. The property may be owned or managed by, or leased or rented to.

WHY THIS GUIDE MATTERS TO YOU AND YOUR HOME

Health and social wellbeing

Having a safe, secure, comfortable and quality home is an essential building block of health.

It is well known that silica dust causes respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological problems, as well as other health issues that can affect people's long-term wellbeing, especially among children.

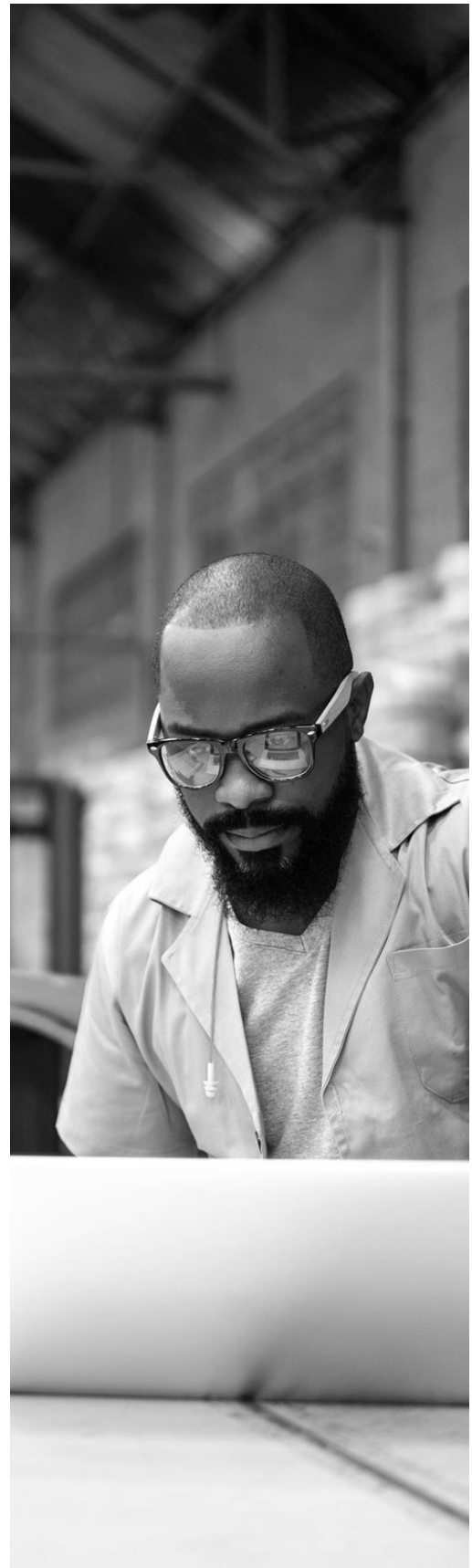
Whether you're doing the work yourself, hiring a contractor, or simply living nearby construction activities.

Emissions of silica dust (RCS) can vary substantially from day to day, depending on the level of activity, the specific operations being undertaken, and the weather conditions.

Guides, legislation and regulations

With the ever-increasing demand for healthier homes, and the drive towards stricter building standards and regulations, aimed at improving housing air quality.

Whether working directly or indirectly for you - contractors when undertaking works have a legal, occupational and moral obligation to not only protect their workforce from RCS hazards but also have a non-occupational duty of care towards protecting households, individuals and the public from potential silica dust exposure when undertaking works.



KEY GUIDANCE, LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

[Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 \(HSW Act\)](#)

[Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 \(MHSWR\)](#)

[Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 \(COSHH\)](#)

[Construction \(Design and Management\) Regulations, 2015](#)

[National Planning Policy Framework: Air Quality \(revised 1 November 2019\).](#)

Construction Phase Plan (CPP) CDM

Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

Construction Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Management Plan



Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 as amended by the Environment Act 2021

Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (PG22)

August 2022



Managing health and safety in construction

Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015



SILICA DUST (RCS) AND YOUR HEALTH



Silica dust poses a risk to health when RCS is:

- Inhaled (inhalation)
- Swallowed (ingestion)
- Absorbed through the skin (absorption)

Undisturbed silica-based materials in good condition do not pose a health risk

However, if the material is damaged or crumbling (that is, has become friable), or is disturbed by breaking, cutting, drilling or sanding, RCS particles are released into the air.



Silica Dust related diseases

Inhalation is the primary mode of transmission of silica dust. When RCS particles are breathed in, they may remain deep within the lungs.

They can lodge in lung tissue and cause inflammation, scarring and some more serious silica dust related diseases, which usually take many years, if not decades, to develop.

The four major types of silica dust related diseases are shown below in no particular order of severity.

Note: A person may show signs of more than one of these diseases.



Respiratory

- Interstitial lung diseases (ILD) a group of 100 or so chronic lung disorders
- Silicosis, pneumoconiosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), bronchitis and asthma



Autoimmune/Renal Diseases

- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), systemic sclerosis (scleroderma), rheumatoid arthritis (RA), and certain types of small vessel vasculitis with renal involvement.
- Renal involvement may occur as a toxic effect or in the context of autoimmune disease, and silica damage may act as an additive factor on an existing, well-established renal disease
- Increased risk of chronic non-malignant renal disease, including end-stage renal disease (ESRD) and various forms of glomerulonephritis



Cardiovascular

- Growing evidence suggests a relationship between occupational silica exposure and heart disease
- Caused by heavy, prolonged exposure to RCS



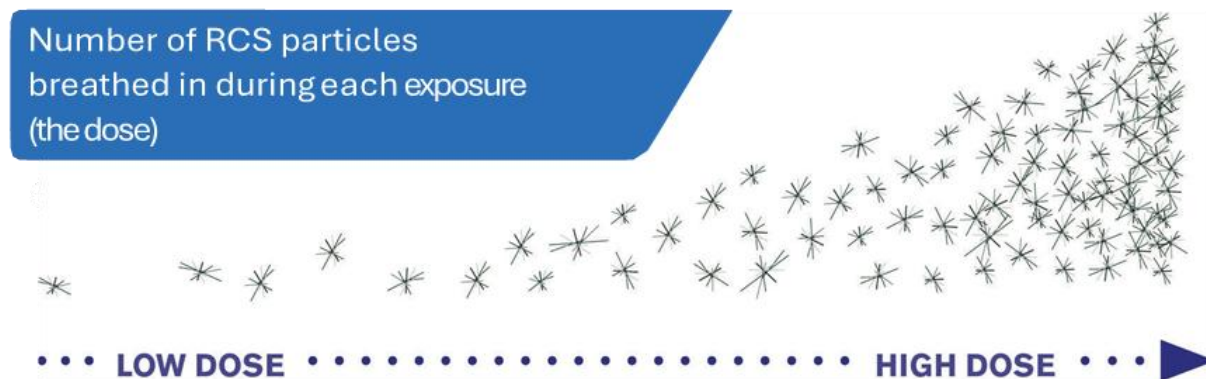
Cancer

- Bladder, lung, larynx, head, neck, nasal, leukemia, lymphopoietic etc.
- Risk of developing lung cancer is increased in people who smoke or have a pre-existing lung disease

Risk factors for developing silica dust related diseases

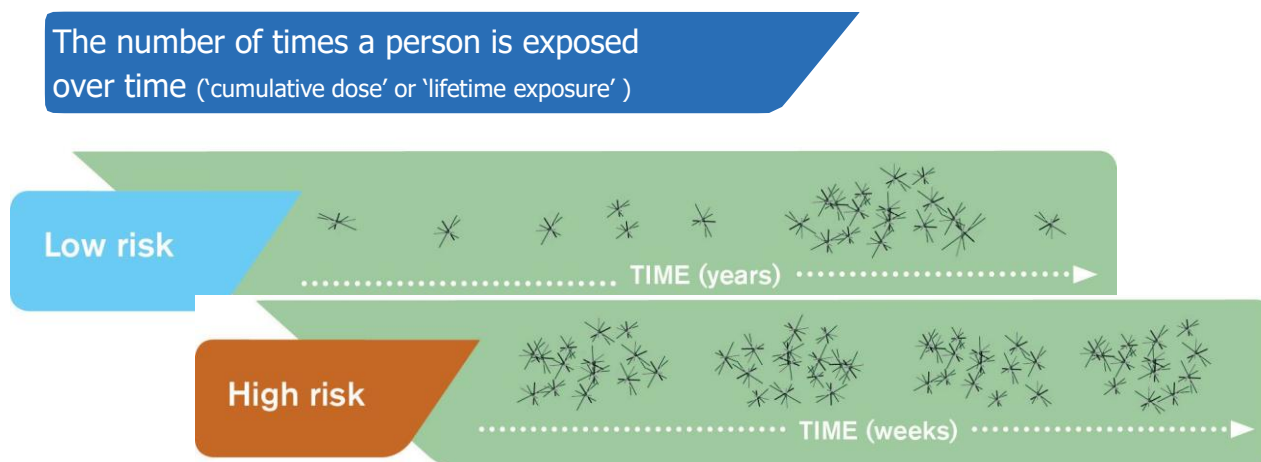
Total number of dust particles breathed in

The risk of developing a silica dust related disease increases in proportion to the number of silica dust particles a person breathes in during their life. This, in turn, depends on how many RCS particles are breathed in and how often.



Although there is no safe level of exposure to RCS, occasional exposure to low levels of particles poses only a low risk to your health.

The risk of developing a silica dust related disease increases when a larger number of RCS particles are breathed in or swallowed or absorbed.



Very occasional exposure to a larger number of RCS particles (e.g. unsafe home renovation or demolition next door) poses a risk to your health.

But frequent exposure to a larger number of RCS particles (e.g. builder or tradesperson using unsafe techniques) is much more likely to pose a risk to your health.

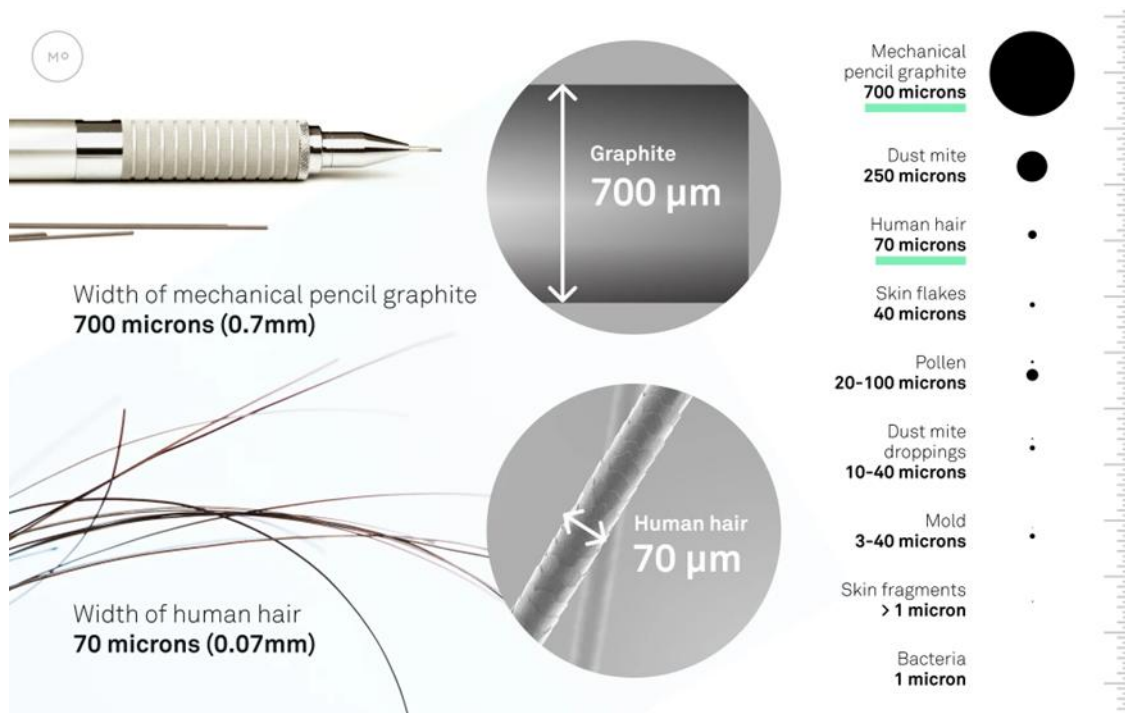
Why does dust particle size matter?

Particles that are too small to see do the most damage because they can get into our bodies. Our lungs have evolved to resist parasites and pathogens that we might inhale by catching them with hairs called alveoli that are covered in sticky mucus. Once caught, invaders can be pushed back out of the lungs. But anything that dodges the alveoli may get deep into the lungs where gases like oxygen are absorbed into the bloodstream. Because oxygen is pumped to every part of the body, any toxins or pathogens can also get everywhere.

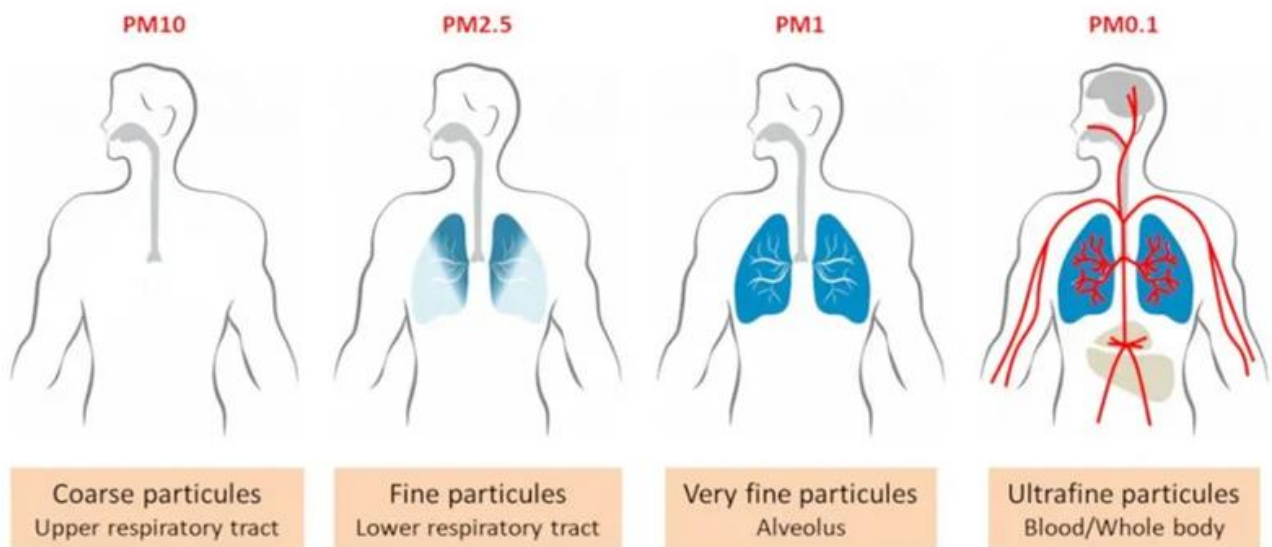


Particles above about 10 microns, are usually caught by your lungs' defenses before they get too far. Particles around one micron, or $1\mu\text{m}$ may enter the lungs but will stop there. Your lungs can usually filter things as small as this but the smallest things we can see are around 100 microns or close to the width of a hair.

For comparison, the graphite in a mechanical pencil is usually about 0.7 millimeters or 700 microns, and human hair is about one tenth the size of that at around 70 microns.



Particles that are 0.1 microns and smaller may enter the bloodstream and have been linked to negative health effects throughout the body such as [cancer](#), [dementia](#), [multiple sclerosis](#), and even [diabetes](#).



The current regulated Worker Exposure Limit (WEL) (over an eight-hour period) is $0.1\text{mg}/\text{m}^3$ silica exposure limit allowable over an 8-hour working day. In the past, workers in construction or mining often encountered RCS concentrations significantly higher than background levels.



The tiny amount of silica dust is the most you should be breathing in a day



EH40/2005 Workplace exposure limits

Containing the list of workplace exposure limits for use with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (as amended)

Who is at risk of developing silica dust-related diseases?

We are all exposed to low levels of silica dust in the air we breathe every day. Exposure to silica dust in normal day-to-day life is generally minimal and not considered a significant health risk for the public because the levels of RCS present in the environment are very low.

However, most people are also exposed to higher levels of RCS at some time in their lives, for example, in their workplace, community or home environment. Nonetheless, this kind of infrequent exposure is also unlikely to result in any ill effects.

Most people who develop silica-related diseases have worked on jobs where they frequently breathed in large amounts of RCS particles. For example, in the past, construction workers using unsafe practices may have frequently encountered RCS levels well above background levels.

Family members of exposed workers or those who lived close to active quarries or mines are also at risk. An exposed worker or home DIYer can carry RCS particles on their clothing, boots, skin, hair and tools. Householders should be aware to ensure family members are not exposed to these RCS particles. There is currently no publicly available data quantifying RCS-related incidents specifically among the general public, likely because such exposure outside of industrial environments is minimal. However, there has been growing concern regarding non-occupational or ambient exposure compounded by the lack of non-occupational silica dust standards and guidelines. This is further intensified by a lack of monitoring and reporting of non-occupational exposures and non-occupational RCS dust generated diseases.

When are householders likely to be exposed to silica dust?

Householders may be exposed to RCS particles during accidental damage to silica-based materials in the home, or because of unsafe handling of asbestos material by tradespeople or by the householders themselves. Some typical scenarios are described below.

During normal wear and tear

In normal circumstances, the risk to householders from RCS is very low. If the house contains silica-based products that are in good condition, it is best to leave them alone but check them from time to time for any signs of damage or deterioration.

The natural ageing and weathering of silica-based concrete roof tiles releases silica dust over time. However, this is unlikely to pose a risk to health because the RCS particles are dispersed, diluted by the wind and washed away in rainwater runoff systems. Air testing near buildings with asbestos cement roofs has found very little increase in fibre levels.

During minor household maintenance or accidental disturbance

Accidental exposure may be a result of someone doing light drilling, putting up a new towel rail, or even cleaning up garden debris.

If accidental exposure occurs, take prompt steps to manage it by reducing personal exposure and preventing further occurrences. For example, you could dampen the work area, wipe down surfaces with a wet cloth, close doors and windows or even temporarily relocate while the work is being carried out.

Tasks which require the use of power tools for cutting, drilling, grinding, sanding or sawing, can release significant numbers of RCS particles.



You should never use power tools without first determining how to control and protect yourself from exposure to silica dust.

See pages 24–31 for further information on how to protect yourself and your family, including young children.

If you suspect that a neighbour or other person is not observing safe work practices (e.g. by using power tools while cutting concrete slabs or by using a high-powered sanding machine), report the issue to your local authority/government environmental health officer.

Note that when you engage a tradesperson, your home becomes their workplace. It is therefore important to alert any tradespeople who come to your house that they need to ensure they implement appropriate control and exposure measures to ensure you and your family are not exposed to RCS.

If you are concerned about a tradesperson's work practices you could contact your local authority/government or UK Health and Safety Executive, who will advise on occupational health and safety issues for the tradesperson.



CASE STUDY

SAM'S CONCRETE ROOF TILES

Sam is concerned about his roof. He has areas of leakage, particularly around the valley gutter areas. The roof itself looks old; it is dirty and a mouldy dark colour from lichen. The roof tiles are made from concrete material which he suspects may contain silica. He has also noticed the increased number of storms and hail damage in the news reports for the area, and is worried about the further roof damage. He contacts a builder, who tells him the roof tiles will need to be replaced, that there will be an element of on-site cutting of the roof tiles, more so when repairing the valley gutter sections.

Sam is aware of the potential risk of silica dust exposure, therefore he proceeds to ask the builder what he proposes to do in terms of safe work practices. The builder informs him not to worry as it is only a "small amount of dust". The builder further adds this will cost extra money if Sam wants "all singing and dancing" safe work practices to be included in his quote. He realises it might cost him money but he decides to get advice. He contacts his local occupational health and safety authority and is subsequently informed the builder must comply with all relevant health and safety legislation and regulations as standard. Sam then acts on the advice he has received and approaches a number of experienced contractors to get quotes for the removal and replacement of the roof. He decides to put money aside to get the roof replaced as soon as he can afford it.

CASE STUDY

JOAN'S EXTENSION

Recently, Joan had a new porch built on her house. The builder correctly advised her that given they would need to carry out demolition, dismantling and structural alteration, it would involve multiple safety measures to ensure structural stability and safeguard workers and occupants from silica dust contamination. Joan is now worried that the rest of her house might also be contaminated with silica dust during the works. The builder assures her debris generated by demolition or contained within the workspace or found within the defined work perimeter of the works shall be removed from the site at the end of every working day. However, he tells her to contact him if she notices that there is silica dust elsewhere.

While work was in progress, they provided a separate, lit, protected passageway to minimise the silica dust travelling throughout the house. Dust abatement measures were used to suppress dust during demolition, such as water dust suppression system, power tool dust extraction attachments to improve safety and reduce the risk of RCS as well as lower clean up time. Builders wore disposable masks rated as FFP3 and/or reusable half or full-face respirators equipped with P3 particle filters. As well as Type 5 protective clothing suitable for environments with hazardous dusts to avoid contamination in other areas of Joan's home as well as limit the carrying of RCS into the wider environment (e.g. vans, their own homes, etc.).

By following these simple steps, Joan has minimised the risk to herself and her neighbours.

CASE STUDY

DENNIS AND MAUREEN'S BACK GARDEN

Dennis and Maureen have just moved into a run-down old house in the inner city. While landscaping the back garden, they plan to build a dedicated patio area using Indian sandstone. Dennis thinks he can tackle this work himself but is not sure.

His friend, who is a builder, tells him that there is more than likely a very high level of RCS content in the slabs so he informs him he must take all the necessary safety precautions when cutting the slabs, and that he should get advice about using the right protection. Dennis and Maureen think that sounds expensive and they want to do the patio themselves. They start the patio, which involves mixing of cement, cutting of stone slabs and removal of all the existing debris, which Dennis piles in a skip in his driveway.

Margaret, who lives next door to the couple, sees Dennis wielding a large petrol driven circular saw. As the saw bites into what looks like stone or concrete, she sees the huge plumes of dust and the rubbish in the driveway and hears the noise of the slabs being cut. She has read about RCS risks and is concerned that silica dust might be blowing over to her house. She is particularly worried about her four children, aged from 2 to 10 years. She keeps the children indoors and phones her local government environmental health officer (EHO), who comes straight out to inspect the work next door.

The EHO tells them to stop working immediately. After some questions to Dennis and Maureen, the EHO concludes that between them there did not appear to be any ear defenders, head protection, gloves, eye protection or respiratory protection. After the EHO's assessment of the site, the couple are given a formal notice that they must take all reasonable precautions to reduce exposure to a minimum and dispose of the material safely (according to the requirements of their local authority), including double bagging, labelling all of the materials, measures to reduce dust and disposal at a designated construction waste disposal site. The EHO also advises about wearing personal and respiratory protective equipment (respirator, gloves and overalls) while doing the work.

The EHO also reassures Margaret and explains the procedures that Dennis will now be using. He tells her to contact him again if she has any further concerns.

During renovations and demolition work

During renovations or demolition of affected houses, RCS will be released into the air. While the overall health risk in these circumstances may be very low, extra precautions should be taken to reduce the chance of RCS becoming airborne and subsequently being inhaled.

The workers' exposure can be reduced by wearing both appropriate personal and respiratory protective equipment such as overalls and masks.

Other precautions include dampening down surfaces, employing a water suppression system, minimising the use of power tools or using power tool dust extraction attachments as well as vacating the home during the renovation (see pages 29–34 for further details).

In some cases, the level of protective equipment used by tradespeople will be higher than that recommended for householders. This is because tradespeople, particularly builders, often encounter large quantities of RCS material during the normal course of their work. They therefore have a higher risk of developing a silica related disease and so need to use more protective equipment than householders.

The generation of RCS during major renovations or demolitions of buildings and structures needs to be supervised by qualified personnel to prevent the release of RCS into the surrounding wider environment and neighbourhood.

If you are concerned about demolition work being carried out close to your home, remain indoors and contact your local authority/government or the UK Health and Safety Executive, who will advise on occupational health and safety issues.

Five tips for reducing your risk



Become Informed:

- Be aware of the health effects of breathing air that has silica dust in it
- Know what causes silica dust at in your home



Whether either yourself or a builder is carrying out work. Ensure you have a good understanding of your project and the type of control measures you'll need to stay safe.



Plan ahead to prevent disturbing and releasing excessive RCS, particularly when renovating or demolishing a structure that might contain silica-based products (such as a house, garage or shed).



Get advice from your local government environmental health officer, or Health and Safety Executive, on safe exposure and control of silica dust (RCS) and on the use of appropriate protective and respiratory equipment.



Engage a reputable contractor when undertaking major home renovations or demolitions where RCS may be present. Consider checking their procedures and quality of protection and clean-up.

KEY 'DOS AND DON'TS'

FOR HANDLING SILICA DUST MATERIALS

Before starting any work involving silica-based materials, you should assess the size and nature of the job, and your ability to complete the task. If the job appears to be complex, or beyond your ability, employ a qualified tradesperson.

If you decide to go ahead yourself, assess the number of sessions that will be necessary to complete the work. You should then obtain enough suitable equipment to carry out the work. All the equipment described below (including personal and respiratory protective equipment) should be available from most hardware and safety equipment suppliers.

Personal and Respiratory Protective Equipment

Wearing the right personal and respiratory protective equipment always is essential to protect your health when working with silica dust. Hence, there are several considerations: Head Protection; Eye Protection; Hearing Protection; Safety Gloves; Safety Footwear

Wear an appropriate respirator

Ordinary dust masks are not effective in preventing the inhalation of RCS and silica dust. You should wear either a half-face or full-face respirator fitted with a class P3 filter cartridge, or a disposable FFP3 mask (class P3) disposable respirator or a full-face powered respirator appropriate for silica dust. These masks require fit testing to ensure a proper seal, and users must be clean-shaven to maintain the seal. The use of RPE with an APF of 20 is considered necessary for adequate protection in construction environments where silica dust is present. Respiratory protection devices should comply with EN 140 standards. This number will always be displayed on the mask.



Half-face P3 filter respirator



Twin-strap disposable P3 mask



Twin-strap disposable P2 mask



Keep your respirator on until the work session has been completed, the cleaning is done, and your contaminated clothing has been removed, bagged and sealed. Respirators or masks should be worn continually by each person removing asbestos cement material.

Wear disposable clothing

Disposable coveralls designed for silica dust protection should be used to prevent the contamination of clothing and footwear. An attached hood or disposable hat, and suitable disposable gloves should also be worn.

The coveralls should have no external pockets or velcro fastenings, and the gloves should be sufficiently robust for the work to be done. Overall, selecting coveralls that meet or exceed the EN 1073-2 Class 2 standard (Type 5 or 6) is vital for minimising health risks associated with silica dust exposure.



For comprehensive protection, disposable coveralls should be used in conjunction with appropriate respiratory protection, such as P3-rated face-fitted disposable masks, reusable respirators with P3 filters, or powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs) with P3 filters, to address inhalation risks.

You must also follow proper decontamination procedures to prevent secondary exposure, as contaminated garments worn under the coveralls can lead to silica particles being carried around the home.

When handling or removing silica-based products in general

DO

Work in a well-ventilated area and, where possible, in the open air (but not on very windy days)

Thoroughly wet down the material before you start and regularly during the work by lightly spraying surfaces with water or with low-pressure water from a garden hose (if outdoors); always keep it dampened

Minimise cutting or breaking of the silica-based products

Keep your respirator on

Remove and dispose of personal protective equipment appropriately

Shower and wash your hair immediately afterwards

DON'T

Use high-pressure water jets to wet surfaces as this may increase the spread of loose particles or dust

You should never use power tools without first determining how to control and protect yourself from exposure to silica dust.

Dry sand, wire brush or scrape surfaces to be painted

When working indoors

DO

Isolate the area you are working on from the rest of the building by closing and sealing internal doors

Leave external doors and windows open to maximise ventilation

Cover the floor with heavy-duty plastic sheeting to catch dust, debris and offcuts

Keep household members, visitors and pets away from the area until the work is completed.

DON'T

Spread silica dust through areas of the building that are not protected by plastic sheeting (e.g. by walking through unprotected areas without removing shoes).



When working outdoors

DO

Inform your neighbours of the proposed work, and advise them to close doors and windows while the work is being undertaken

Close all windows and doors of your home, and cover air vents to prevent silica dust from entering the building

Cover the ground and vegetation with heavy-duty plastic sheeting to catch dust, debris and offcuts

Remove play equipment, personal belongings and vehicles from the work area

DON'T

Work with silica-based products on a windy day

Walk indoors without removing all PPE and RPE as well as ensuring all silica dust has been removed



Cleaning up

DO

Thoroughly clean the work area, tools and equipment as soon as possible after finishing the job

Clean up any silica dust residues in the work area, and on the tools and equipment used by using wet rags and a wet mop, or with a vacuum cleaner fitted with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter which conforms to AS4260. Attachments with brushes should be avoided because they are difficult to decontaminate

Double bag, seal and dispose of any materials used during the decontamination, such as rags and mops

Keep dust, debris and offcuts dampened with water

Keep your respirator on.

DON'T

Remove any materials from the work area until cleaned up as described above

Clean the work area by wet sweeping or by using a household vacuum cleaner store



Packaging and disposal of silica dust

DO

Carefully bag the material, in 0.2mm thick polythene bags
Keep the bags to a manageable size and completely seal them with adhesive tape (to minimise the risk of splitting) and gently evacuate excess air in a way that does not cause the release of dust

Clearly label the packages 'RCS WASTE' using a permanent marker pen

As soon as possible, securely transport and dispose of the bags at a designated waste disposal site in your area (your local government or Environment Protection Authority will provide advice on where this is)

Alternatively, hire a special mini skip from a waste removal company to fill with your bagged construction waste and have it collected by the waste company

DON'T

Dispose of silica dust waste in a domestic garbage bin or rubbish skip

Reuse or recycle silica dust waste

Dump silica dust waste illegally

Dispose of silica dust during council 'hard rubbish' collections



Removing and disposing of personal protective equipment

DO

Peel off coveralls, hat and gloves

Immediately seal all these items in two 0.2mm thick (heavy-duty) polythene bags (i.e. double bagged) and clearly label to identify the contents as described above in 'Packaging and disposal of RCS'

Dispose of these bags with the other silica dust waste

Wash or wipe reusable footwear using wet rags

Leave the respirator on until the contaminated clothing is removed, bagged and sealed, then dispose of the respirator by double bagging it as described above.

DON'T

Keep or recycle disposable protective equipment

Don't attempt to shake the dust out of overalls or clean the items with a vacuum cleaner

Launder or clean gloves — the laundering process causes physical damage or deterioration of the gloves.



FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON SILICA DUST

General advice on Silica Dust

Health and
Safety
Executive

HSE



0345 300 9923



www.hse.gov.uk

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union

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0800 709 007



[https://resources.unitetheunion.org/
media/1252/1252.pdf](https://resources.unitetheunion.org/media/1252/1252.pdf)

All-Party
Parliamentary
Group (APPG)
for
Respiratory
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APPG

[https://www.parliament.co.uk/APPG/respiratory-
health](https://www.parliament.co.uk/APPG/respiratory-health)

Institution of
Occupational
Safety and
Health (IOSH)

IOSH



+44 (0)116 350 0700



<https://iosh.com/guidance-and-resources>

USEFUL CONTACTS

British
Occupational
Hygiene Society
(BOHS)

Breathe Freely campaign



<https://breathefreely.org.uk/>

Asthma +
Lung UK

Asthma + Lung UK

0300 222 5800

NHS

NHS



<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/lung-cancer/>

