

Silica Safety



Toolbox Talk #47

What is Silica?

Silica (often referred to as quartz) is a very common mineral, and can be found in many materials on construction sites, including drywall, tile, concrete, and landscaping materials. Cutting, grinding, drilling, or otherwise disturbing the materials can cause it to enter the air as dust, and even low levels of exposure over time can result in a number of respiratory diseases like lung cancer or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Example Hazardous Tasks and Materials

Task

Abrasive blasting
Bushhammering
Cutting/sawing
Demolishing/disturbing
Drilling
Earthmoving
Grinding
Jackhammering
Milling
Mixing
Polishing
Roofing
Sacking/patching
Sanding
Scabbling
Scarifying
Scraping
Sweeping/cleaning up

Materials

Asphalt (for paving)
Brick
Cement
Concrete
Concrete Block
Drywall
Tile
Grout
Mortar
Paints containing silica
Plaster
Rock
Roofing tiles & pavers
Sand
Soil (fill dirt and top soil)
Stone
Stucco/EIFS
Terrazzo

IT'S NOT A BIG ASK



JUST WEAR A MASK

[Click for video](#)

How to avoid silica exposure?

- Use water or foam to suppress the dust created when working with materials
- Use a vacuum dust collector when grinding/cutting materials
- Use respiratory PPE (rated N95 or above) that has been properly fit-tested