

Silica and Dust Control — Safe System of Work

Display a copy where the work is done.

Before you start

- Identify the material. Concrete, stone, brick, block, tile, mortar and screed all release silica.
- Ask first whether the cutting can be avoided, reduced, or done off site by a supplier.
- Set up water suppression or on-tool extraction BEFORE you start. Not after the first cut.
- Check the extraction is M or H class and that the filter is not clogged.
- Check your RPE is the right type, face fit tested for you, and that you are clean shaven at the seal.
- Clear or screen the area. Other people have no protection at all.
- Plan how you will clean up before you make any dust.

The numbers that get checked

Item	Requirement	Why
Workplace exposure limit	0.1 mg/m ³ respirable crystalline silica, 8-hour TWA (EH40)	The number an inspector will ask you about
Engineered stone silica content	Up to about 95%, against roughly 30% for granite	Which is why worktop fabrication is the highest risk work of all
Hierarchy	Control measures FIRST, RPE last	COSHH reg 7. Reaching for a mask first is the classic failing
LEV testing	Thorough examination and test normally at least every 14 months	Plus daily user checks
Face fit testing	Every tight-fitting mask, on the actual wearer, recorded	A mask that has not been fit tested is not protection
Health surveillance records	Kept at least 40 years	Because the disease appears decades later
Sweeping and compressed air	NEVER	Both put settled dust straight back into the air

While you are working

- Never dry cut. If the water or extraction stops, the work stops.
- Keep the extraction hood or water feed positioned correctly throughout.
- Work outside or in the open air where you can.
- Keep bystanders out of the area.
- Wear the RPE for the whole task, not just the worst part.
- Take it off outside the dusty area, not in it.

Stop immediately if

- The water supply or the extraction stops working.
- You can see a dust cloud.
- Somebody without protection enters the area.

- Your mask will not seal, or you have facial hair at the seal.
- The filter is clogged or the machine sounds wrong.
- You are working indoors and the control is not keeping up.

Scope and limitations — read before use

IMPORTANT — SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS. This document is a template and guidance product. It is a starting point, not a finished assessment. Every workplace is different, and only the employer knows their own site, vehicles, people and tasks. The legal duties under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998, the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 and all other relevant law remain with the employer at all times and cannot be transferred to PHW Services or to any document. You must read, adapt and complete this material for your own site, satisfy yourself that it is suitable and sufficient, and seek competent advice where you are unsure. PHW Services does not warrant that using this pack will prevent an accident, prevent enforcement action, or achieve compliance in any particular case. Nothing in this pack is approved or endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive.

Contains public sector information published by the Health and Safety Executive and licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. This pack is not an HSE publication, is not approved or endorsed by HSE, and does not reproduce the HSE logo. Always refer to the current HSE guidance and legislation at [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk), which may have changed since this pack was written.