

Stop Dust before it Stops YOU!



Over 1 million workers exposed to silica dust each year

4000 deaths a year from COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema)

800 deaths a year from past exposure to silica dust

(Figures from Karen Clayton, HSE and image from HSE)

So what can you do?

1. Understand the health hazards of what materials and substances you are working with
2. Evaluate all the risks
3. Control the exposures

How do you go about it?

1. Get as much information as you can on what you are working with from manufacturers and suppliers so you know as much as possible about things like workplace exposure limits and can assess the health risks
2. Think about sourcing different products and materials – they might be less hazardous
3. Consider if you need to change how you are working – would changing something make it safer?
4. Decide if you can separate/segregate working areas to minimise exposure
5. Look at engineering controls such as suppression and extraction or ventilation
6. Check you have given staff all the information, instruction, training and supervision they need to carry out the work safely. This includes risk assessments, safe systems of work, CoSHH information and more.
7. Review your PPE/RPE to ensure it is adequate and fit for purpose. This is a last resort to protecting your staff not the first! Don't forget things like face fit testing if it is needed.
8. Make sure you assess, test and monitor on a regular basis to make sure you are doing everything possible to protect staff and it is 'gold standard' not just a tick box exercise.
9. Consider the occupational health side of your work, not just the safety. Is health surveillance needed and is it sufficient? (Paper tick box assessments are not enough!)

Where to go for more help and advice

1. **The HSE** – loads of advice, guidance and tool box talks here and if you have staff who need information in another language you can often find it here too!

2. **BOHS – currently running ‘Breathe Freely’** campaign – more info and lots of useful fact sheets at breathefreely.org.uk
3. **Safe Systems Consultancy** – We’re here to help, drop us an email or give us a call!
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