

Silica dust in the mining and quarrying industry

If you work in the mining and quarrying industry, it is likely you are exposed to silica dust.

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What is silica dust?

Silica is a naturally occurring mineral found in the earth's crust. Silica dust is generated when silica-containing materials are cut, crushed, drilled, ground, polished, sanded, sawed or disturbed with force.

Reducing exposure to silica dust

Following the Hierarchy of Controls is the most effective way to reduce your exposure to silica dust.

It may not always be possible to **eliminate** silica dust from your workplace. If you cannot eliminate it, you must follow control measures from the highest level of effectiveness to the lowest.



Substitution

Use a less hazardous substance such as replacing sand with garnet as an abrasive blasting agent.



Isolation

Use remotely operated machinery such as conveyors.



Engineering

Lowering vehicle speeds on mine haulage roads and underground.



Administrative

Training and information for workers on silica dust exposure.



Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Wear approved and correctly fitted respiratory protective equipment. This includes face fit testing to ensure a proper seal.



You should never rely solely on PPE to protect yourself from silica dust.