

HAZARD ALERT FOR WORKERS:

SILICA DUST FROM COUNTERTOP WORK CAN HARM YOU!

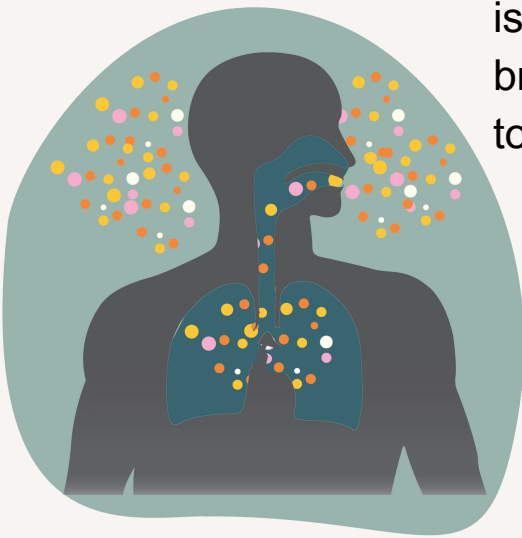


DO YOU MAKE COUNTERTOPS USING QUARTZ OR ENGINEERED STONE?

- Engineered stone, also called quartz, is the most dangerous kind of countertop stone to work with. It has much more silica than other kinds of countertop stone.
- Cutting, grinding, chipping, sanding, drilling, and polishing these products can harm you.
- These tasks put silica dust into the air. Silica dust is unsafe to breathe.

HOW DOES THE DUST HARM YOU?

When silica dust gets into your lungs, it can damage them. This can cause a disease called silicosis. There is no cure for silicosis. Silicosis makes it hard to breathe, which gets worse over time and can lead to death.



WORKER DEATHS IN CALIFORNIA

Since 2019, we have learned of at least 10 workers in California who died from silicosis. They worked polishing, cutting, and grinding quartz countertops, and most were in their 30s and 40s when they died.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE BREATHING PROBLEMS FROM DUST AT MY JOB?

Ask your employer for the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for the stone countertop. See a doctor if you are coughing or have trouble breathing. Bring the SDS and this Hazard Alert with you. The doctor can test you to see what is causing your breathing problems and tell you about treatments to help you breathe and actions you need to take to avoid breathing silica dust.



HOW YOUR WORKPLACE MUST KEEP YOU SAFE:

Cal/OSHA makes and enforces health and safety rules for workplaces in California. Under these rules your employer must train you about silica, how it can affect your health, and how to work safely. Your employer must also measure how much silica dust is in the air.

If levels are too high, your employer **MUST**:

- Find ways to **lower dust** levels.
- Send you to the doctor to check for silicosis.
- Give you a **respirator** and train you how to use it.



- Always use water.
- Use dust-capturing machines or special vacuums (HEPA) to clean dust.
- Wear a respirator while working.
- Change your clothes at work. Do not take silica dust home with you.
- Do not sweep or use compressed air to clean dust.

If it is a tight-fitting type of respirator, it must be tested on your face to make sure it fits correctly.



If it's a powered air purifying respirator, or PAPR, you must know how to check if the battery is charged properly.

RESOURCES:

- The CDPH Occupational Health Branch has more information on [Silica Safety Resources Webpage](#)
- More information about the [Cal/OSHA Silica Standard](#)
- More information about the [Cal/OSHA Hazard Communication \(Right-to-know\) Standard](#)
- For more information, contact the CDPH Occupational Health Branch at occhealth@cdph.ca.gov or call (800)970-6680.
- To obtain a copy of this document in an alternate format, please contact (510) 620-5757. Allow at least 10 working days to coordinate alternate format services. CA Relay Service: 711.



For more information, check out our **Silica Safety resources for Stone Fabricators Webpage.**