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WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY GUIDELINE

Management of Respirable Crystalline Silica in Quarries

Ensuring the health and safety of workers and contractors is fundamental to the heavy construction materials industry.

CCAA with the support of its members has developed the **'Workplace Health & Safety Guideline – Management of Respirable Crystalline Silica in Quarries.'**

The Guideline has been developed to assist in the management of worker exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) dust in quarries. Recent events, including the detection of new cases of black lung in the Queensland coal mining industry, and cases of silicosis in the manufactured stone benchtop industry have brought the management of harmful workplace dusts, including RCS, back into focus.

The incidence of silicosis in the quarrying industry is very low, however, exposure to RCS may arise in some quarry operations through the processing of sand, stone and gravel containing silica based minerals such as quartz.

While not all quarries and not all processes will lead to exposure to RCS, CCAA members are conscious of the need to ensure our industry continues to proactively manage any risks.

The Guideline is directed at occupational exposures to RCS. Environmental or community exposure from quarries is much lower than those encountered in the workplace and not sufficiently high to cause disease. Community members should be reassured that if the risk to workers is managed effectively, then the likelihood of community exposure will also be managed.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the guideline document is to provide guidance to quarry operators regarding the appropriate assessment and control of RCS in Australian quarries.

The Guideline aims to ensure the protection of workers and contractors from the health risks associated with RCS and in doing so, provide operators with guidance on:

- Work health and safety obligations relevant to RCS;
- The risk management framework;
- Controlling the risk and examples of known controls;
- Responsibilities when undertaking personal exposure monitoring and health monitoring; and
- Employee consultation, education and training.

The Guideline includes helpful information on control methods used specifically in the quarrying industry, a toolbox talk for educating workers and links to videos and other useful resources to support operators to design and implement effective control programs for RCS.

In developing the Guideline, CCAA has followed the Safe Work Australia risk management process. This step-by-step process provides a planned and systematic approach to risk management, that helps operators respond to change and facilitate continuous improvement in their businesses.