ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY UNIT
OHS ALERT

FEBRUARY 2022

DONE N' DUSTED

NO DRY CUTTING, GRINDING, CHASING OF PRODUCTS CONTAINING CRYSTALLINE SILICA...

By now, we should all know the dangers of silica dust and what it does to our bodies. New Crystalline Silica Regulations introduced by WorkSafe in November 2021 , made it illegal to dry cut any engineered stone product, as well as introducing Australia's first licensing regime for engineered stone and additional regulatory oversight of high risk crystalline silica work outside of engineered stone for all industries – including our construction industry.

For us this basically means absolutely no Dry Cutting or dry clean up procedures for any products containing crystalline silica – including cement, concrete, bricks, tiles sandstone etc.

Exposure Standards:
The National exposure standard for crystalline silica dust is 0.05mg/m3 as a TWA. However, the CFMEU, the VTHC and WorkSafe Victoria strongly recommend and endorse an exposure standard of no more than 0.02mg/m3 as a TWA – in realistic everyday terms, this can only be achieved if there is no dry cutting and/or cleanup procedures of any materials containing crystalline silica.

By law (OHS Regulation 166) employers must carry out air monitoring for Crystalline Silica dust where there is uncertainty about whether the exposure standard is or may be exceeded, or – to determine whether there is a risk to health.

If you are in any doubt about working with and/or cleaning up building products containing crystalline silica, you can also refer to our 2017 Alert " The real dangers of Silica Dust" (see link - https://vic.cfmeu. org/resources/silica-dust-dangers) , or call your CFMEU organizer or the CFMEU office on 93413444.

https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/dust-containing-crystalline-silica-construction-work

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