

# Safety Tip

3 July 2026

Let's work together to keep ourselves and our workers safe.

## Exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS)

Silica dust is created when materials containing silica are cut, crushed, ground, drilled or otherwise disturbed. Exposure to very fine silica dust – respirable crystalline silica (RCS) – dangerous and can cause serious lung disease.

The level of risk to workers will differ depending on the concentration of RCS in the rock source, processing methods used, how the site is designed and operated, and the effectiveness of controls implemented.

For guidance on managing worker exposure to RCS, check out the MinEx [Managing worker exposure to dust in mines and quarries booklet](#).

[MinEx statistics](#) on incidents with the potential to cause harm over the past 8 years show 49 reported incidents of occupational illness.



### You need to ensure that:

1. You consult with a qualified occupational hygienist to assess the risk of worker exposure to RCS, determine what monitoring may be required, and identify control measures needed.
2. Adequate controls are applied to reduce worker exposure to RCS including wet dust suppression, enclosed cabins and reverse pressure air conditioning systems, and appropriate PPE etc.
3. Regular health monitoring is conducted to ensure that control measures are effective.