GOOD PRACTICES FOR SURFACE TREATMENT OF CALCIUM SILICATE MASONRY UNITS

This activity relates to the automated surface treatment (crushing and chiselling) of calcium silicate masonry units containing crystalline silica.

ACCESS

Restrict access to the working area to authorised personnel only.

DESIGN AND EQUIPMENT

- Enclose the materials transport system as much as possible.
- Divide each encapsulation into sections to allow easy access for cleaning and maintenance.
- The nature of the process means that dust will be generated. Control of exposure relies upon isolation of operators from the work process.
- If it is necessary for someone to oversee the operation, then the use of appropriate PPE should be provided.
- Machine controls should be located well away from sources of airborne dust generation.
- Ensure that electrical systems have adequate protection against the hazards present in the working environment, including water and silica dust.
- Prevent material from falling by using an appropriate device.

MAINTENANCE

- Ensure equipment used in the task and building are maintained as advised by the supplier/installer in efficient working order and in good repair.
- Replace consumables in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation.

EXAMINATION AND TESTING

- Visually check all equipment for signs of damage at least once per month or, if it is in constant use, check it more frequently. If used infrequently, then check it before each use!
- Keep records of inspections for a suitable period of time which complies with national laws (minimum five years).

CLEANING AND HOUSEKEEPING

- Clean your workplace on a regular basis.
- Use vacuum or wet cleaning methods.
- **Do not clean up with a dry brush or using compressed air.**

TRAINING

- Give your employees information on the health effects associated with respirable crystalline silica dust.
- Provide employees with training on: dust exposure prevention; checking controls are working and using them; when and how to use any respiratory protective equipment provided and what to do if something goes wrong.
- Refer to task guidance sheet **2.3.4** and part 1 of the Good Practice Guide.

SUPERVISION

- Have a system to check that control measures are in place and that they are being followed. Refer to task guidance sheet **2.3.3**.
- Employers should make sure that employees have all the means to perform the checklist given below.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Refer to task guidance sheet **2.1.15** dedicated to Personal Protective Equipment.
- Risk assessment must be carried out to determine whether existing controls are adequate. If necessary, respiratory protective equipment (with the appropriate protection factor) should be provided and worn.
- Provide storage facilities to keep personal protective equipment clean when not in use.
- Replace the respiratory masks at intervals recommended by the manufacturer/supplier.

EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST

- ☐ Look for signs of damage, wear or poor operation of any equipment used. If you find any problems, tell your supervisor.
- ☐ If you think there is a problem with your dust control equipment, ensure additional control measures are taken to reduce exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust while the problem persists.
- ☐ Clear up spills immediately. Use vacuum cleaning or wet cleaning methods for solids. Dispose of spills safely.
- ☐ Do not clean up with a dry brush or using compressed air.
- ☐ Use, maintain and store any respiratory protective equipment provided in accordance with instructions.

This guidance sheet is aimed at employers to help them comply with the requirements of workplace health and safety legislation, by controlling exposure to respirable crystalline silica.

Following the key points of this task guidance sheet will help reduce exposure.

Depending on the specific circumstances of each case, it may not be necessary to apply all of the control measures identified in this sheet in order to minimise exposure to respirable crystalline silica. i.e. to apply appropriate protection and prevention measures. This document should also be made available to persons who may be exposed to respirable crystalline silica in the workplace, in order that they may make the best use of the control measures which are implemented.

This sheet forms part of the Good Practices Guide on silica dust prevention, which is aimed specifically at the control of personal exposure to respirable crystalline silica in the workplace.