GOOD PRACTICES FOR WET CUTTING PROCESSES OF MASONRY UNITS STONES MATERIALS

This activity relates to fully and semi-automated wet cutting processes of calcium silicate units containing crystalline silica.

ACCESS

Restrict access to the work area to authorised personnel only.

DESIGN AND EQUIPMENT

- Encapsulate the sawing line as much as possible.
- Make the enclosure deep enough to contain equipment and materials.
- Divide each encapsulation into sections to allow easy access for cleaning and maintenance.
- Machine controls should be located well away from sources of airborne dust generation.
- Work only with a connected water system as recommended.
- Ensure that water supplies are adequate and that they are maintained. Take precautions during cold weather against freezing.
- Ensure that all settings of the equipment and water supply are made in accordance with the instruction manual.
- The provision of appropriate drainage systems is essential.

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.

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).
- Put in place measures to control the risk of bacterial growth within water sources used across site, focusing most on systems where water droplets will be generated.

CLEANING AND HOUSEKEEPING

- Clean your workplace on a regular basis.
- Use vacuum or wet cleaning methods.
- **DO NOT clean up with a dry brush orusing 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.
- ☐ Do not clean up with a dry brush or using compressed air.
- ☐ Use, maintain and store any respirator masks provided in accordance with instructions.
- ☐ Check and implement the measures to control the risk of bacterial growth within water sources used across site, focusing most on systems where water droplets will be generated.

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.