

GOOD PRACTICES FOR WORKING WITH CONTRACTORS

This task guidance sheet relates to the employment of external contractors in plants where airborne respirable crystalline silica dust may be generated.

ACCESS

Restrict access to the work area to authorised personnel only.

NATURE OF CONTRACTORS' WORK

It is typical for contractors to be employed in the following types of work (non exhaustive list):

- Design work
- Construction work
- Installation of plant and equipment
- Maintenance and servicing of equipment
- Equipment testing and calibration
- Specialist inspection services (e.g. asbestos, structural)
- Packaging (e.g. bagging)
- Mineral extraction and on-site haulage
- Road haulage
- Cleaning

CONTRACTOR SELECTION CRITERIA

When choosing contractors, the client's selection criteria must include an assessment of the contractor's health and safety performance.

Consider each of the following (non exhaustive list) and ensure that the contractor's performance against each of the criteria is adequate for the risks associated with the job and the area(s) in which it will be conducted.

- Health and safety policy document
- Certificates of training/competence
- Arrangements for health and safety advice and support
- Risk assessment and safe working procedures
- Availability of necessary work equipment
- Measures for control of hazardous substances
- Personal protective equipment arrangements
- Health surveillance arrangements
- Previous accident record
- Employer's Liability and Public Liability insurance arrangements

DO NOT allow a contractor to work on your site unless you are satisfied that he has given due consideration to all health and safety issues.

EXCHANGE OF COMMUNICATION

- It is the client's responsibility to inform external contractors of reasonably foreseeable risks (including those relating to respirable crystalline silica dust) that may be encountered on their site. This information must be provided in the form of written documentation at the pre-tender stage.
- Relevant sections of the Good Practices Guide and Fact Sheets should be sent to the Contractor as part of the pre-tender documentation.
- All contractors must be provided with induction training, prior to commencing work on the client's site, as a condition of them being authorised to enter the working area. If for some reason it is not practicable to provide induction training, then close personal supervision of the contractors must be provided by the client at all times.
- Induction training must include details of site rules and procedures, including any specific dust control measures that are relevant to the contract. Details should be provided of areas and activities for which personal protective equipment must be worn.
- During the induction session, contractors should be tested on their knowledge of their own safe working procedures. Do not allow work to commence until you are satisfied that all individual contractors are fully conversant with the requirements of their employer's safety documentation.
- It may be necessary under national regulations to appoint a central co-ordinator of specific contract works.

WRITTEN AGREEMENT WITH CONTRACTORS

- Outsourcing agreements for jobs entailing potential exposure to respirable crystalline silica should contain a provision regarding health protection.
- The Good Practices Guide together with its Facts Sheets constitutes an integral part of the contract. This means that the Contractor will not only have to respect all general legal provisions regarding Health and Safety but also the recommendations of the Good Practices Document.

SUPERVISION OF CONTRACTORS

The client must provide an appropriate level of supervision of all contractors who are working on their sites. The extent of this supervision will depend upon the complexity of the job and should, as a minimum, involve documented spot checks on the contractor's working practices. However, if it has not been practicable to provide full induction training, then contractors must be provided with close personal supervision at all times.

The client should have in place documented procedures for managing any situation in which a contractor fails to adhere to safe working procedures. Records should be maintained of all actions taken by both the client and the contract firm involved in addressing unsafe working practices.

CLIENT CHECKLIST

- ☐ When selecting contractors, make an assessment of the adequacy of their systems for managing personal exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust.
- ☐ Ensure that contractors are provided with information on the health and safety risks present on your site that are relevant to their work.
- ☐ Provide contractors with induction training before allowing them to start work on your site.
- ☐ Ensure that you adequately supervise contractors in order to satisfy yourself that they are following safe working practices.
- ☐ Do not hesitate to stop the job if contractors are not working safely.

CONTRACTOR CHECKLIST

- ☐ Conduct risk assessments for all of your work activities and document them. You will be required to provide copies to your clients.
- ☐ Ensure that individual contractors are provided with training on the requirements of your risk assessments.
- ☐ Ensure that you maintain communication on health and safety issues with the client at all times.

This guidance sheet is aimed at employers to help them comply with the requirements of workplace health and safety legislation, requiring the same protection standards for external contractors as those applicable to their own employees.

Specifically, the advice given in this sheet is good practice for the management of all contract works, but the wording has been tailored to make it most relevant to circumstances where there is risk of exposure to respirable crystalline silica.

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 contract firms and their employees 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 dust in the workplace. Existing national provisions must always be applied.