

14 August 2018



## **INFORMATION BULLETIN**

### **Silicosis health concerns linked to engineered stone**

Recent pieces in the media have talked about the disease “Silicosis” in relation to engineered stone products used in the building industry.

Perhaps you have these surfaces already installed or are planning to use them in a future project and want to understand more about this topic.

An essastone quartz surface does not pose any risk of Silicosis to you and your family where the material has been installed into your home. The disease relates to workers involved in the fabrication of products where proper safeguards are not followed. Like many industrial processes, procedures like wearing respiratory protection is important and health risks can result where these rules are not adhered to.

### **What is Silicosis and how can you develop it?**

Silicosis is a disease of the lung. Construction workers may be at risk if they work without dust controls and appropriate safety measures in conditions where high concentrations of quartz dust are present. Jackhammering old concrete, excavating on a construction site or close up work cutting and processing products containing quartz such as fabricating slabs of engineered stone or granite in a factory are examples of where dust management is an important consideration to manage this potential hazard. Wearing respiratory protection (dust masks with a particulate filter), local exhaust ventilation and wet cutting processes, all work to minimise the risk to workers contracting this disease.

### **What products are linked to Silicosis?**

Silica is a mineral found in the earth’s crust. The crystalline form of silica is called “Quartz” and is a very common ingredient used in many building materials. Quartz is found in concrete, road base (asphalt), clay bricks and masonry items, terracotta tiles and pavers, sandstone, glass, granite, fibre cement sheets and engineered quartz stone products.

Recent media articles have focused on stone, particularly granite & engineered stone where the main ingredient is often “Quartz”. There is no inherent Silicosis risk from the installed material within the home or office/commercial premises as dust is not emitted from the finished product.

### **Safety of workers**

Laminex, as a supplier of essastone slabs, takes safety very seriously. As a responsible supplier, all of our stone mason customers who are involved in the cutting and processing/installing of the essastone products are provided with quality information about health and safety procedures recommended to minimise dust in the workplace.

## **Safety in your property**

Cutting of small sink and hotplate openings on site by a stone mason may sometimes occur at your property to ensure the accuracy of these fittings. Stone masons should where practical use a wet cut procedure (eg garden hose) to minimise the dust. Dust masks are recommended at all times during the cutting of stone for the operator working in the immediate area.