



# Safety Share

## Silica

Silica is a group of naturally occurring minerals, and the second most common mineral on earth found in most types of rocks, sand, soil and stone. It is also found in construction materials like asphalt, brick, cement, concrete, drywall, grout, mortar, plaster, refractory, stucco and tile.



### Some activities that may generate silica containing dust include:

- Cutting, chipping, drilling and grinding masonry products
- Excavation and trenching
- Road construction
- Mining and quarrying
- Mixing dry concrete and cement
- Sandblasting
- Dry sweeping where silica is present

### How can silica affect my health?

If you breathe silica dust into your lungs, its dust particles may deposit in the air passages. Natural defense mechanisms in the lungs will remove many of these particles, but some may remain.

Repeated exposure to silica dust can cause irreversible lung diseases like silicosis, lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

### What can I do to protect myself?

The key to protecting yourself from silica exposure is to know where these hazards are, and what controls you need in place to protect yourself.