

Health and Safety Instructions

Porcelain slabs are made up of clays, feldspar, amorphous and crystalline silica, inorganic pigments.

Porcelain slabs do not present any health risk or hazard when transported, shipped or used by the end consumer, however their fabrication and processing (i.e. cutting, sawing, grinding, breaking, crushing, drilling, handling) may generate respirable crystalline silica dust.

Silica (quartz, cristobalite, tridymite) is one of the most common element on the earth's surface, and it is found in almost every type of rocks and natural stones such as quartz, marble or granite.

Three dust fractions are of main concern: the inhalable, thoracic and respirable dust fractions. The health effects derive from the respirable fraction, since it can penetrate into the lungs.

Unprotected and uncontrolled long-term exposure and inhalation of respirable crystalline silica particles without the safety measures may cause severe illnesses such as silicosis, a chronic and non-reversible disease, which may cause severe physical disabilities and may be fatal. The pathological process of silicosis may cause complications such as: lung cancer, tuberculosis and autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis.

The instructions are addressed to fabricators and workers in order to reduce and control their exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust during fabrication and processing of slabs. The exposure and personal protection precautions are only necessary during fabrication and processing of porcelain slabs (cutting, sawing, polishing etc.), due to the dust that may be generated in the process, and not from the slab as an end user product. Silica is non-toxic and porcelain slabs surfaces are completely safe for domestic use.

It is important to note that these “Health and Safety Instructions” are not intended to replace your local laws and regulations in term of permissible exposure limits to respirable crystalline silica dust and health/safety practices

Health risks associated with silica dust can be reduced/eliminated and controlled by following the required safety precautions, including those described below.

Safety precautions

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is mandatory in workplaces where risks exist.
- Make cuts and grinding/finishing operations in wet conditions to prevent the release of silica dust

- If dust production is not prevented by using water-based machinery, workers must wear protective gear, such as P3 masks, which should be used and replaced in accordance with the manufacturer 's.
- Ensure the workplace has complete/effective ventilation and filtration system to collect respirable dust.
- Clean the workplace, floors and all exposed surfaces on a daily basis. Employ both wet and vacuum cleaning methods.
- During the cutting of the slabs, material may be sharp. Scraps and broken pieces might be sharp as well.

Prevention and first aid measures

- Fabricators must wear dust mask, safety shoes, anti-cut gloves, protective glasses and noise canceling headphones during handling and fabricating the slab.



- Fabricators mustn't eat or drink during fabricating operations.
- Fabricators must wash their hands, eyes and faces carefully after fabricating the material.
- If any medical issue is noticed, contact a medical doctor as soon as possible.
- It is recommended that all slabs be secured during storage to maintain a safe working environment including adherence to any local laws and regulations. Fabricators should handle the slabs using mechanical or pneumatic devices in safety conditions; in case of manual handling, fabricators should respect the loading limits defined by the local legislation.

Other Information and Disclaimers

The information contained in this "Health and Safety Instructions" is only a summary; it is not possible in this short document to cover in detail all the topics and all the areas concerning crystalline silica dust in the workplace.

Furthermore, any recommendations or suggestions made here are general and can't describe the specific conditions of each fabrication site. In addition, none of the content in these instructions may be considered as a recommendation for using any product or tool in violation of any laws, safety practices or other applicable terms.

We recommend that you also consult with occupational health professionals and other experts concerning all matters regarding control of respirable crystalline silica in each specific workplace.

We also note that the laws and regulations regarding silica dust differ from country to country, and we recommend that you check and observe your local regulations and legislation regarding working in environments containing harmful dust.

In any case where these guidelines contradict your local regulations, your local regulations shall take precedence.

None of the information contained in this Guide creates a contractual relationship between Savema and any fabricator.

Information on occupational safety and health administration appears, among other sources, at www.osha.gov; the International Labor Organization at <https://www.ilo.org/safework/info/lang--en/index.htm>; the European Network for Silica at <https://www.nepsi.eu/>; at <https://www.nepsi.eu/good-practice-guide> the “Good Practice Guide on Workers Health Protection through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products Containing It”, issued by NEPSI; and <https://www.cdc.gov/NIOSH/>.