

Safety Guidelines for Working with Quartz

Quartz is a mineral that is used in EleQuence™ quartz slab products. However, working with quartz can be hazardous if proper safety precautions are not taken. Workers cutting and grinding these materials are at risk of crystalline silica exposure. This safety document outlines the steps that should be followed when working with quartz to ensure the safety of workers.

1. Wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

When working with man-made quartz, it is essential to wear the appropriate PPE to protect against inhalation and skin contact.

Workers should wear:

- Respirators that are approved for quartz dust protection, such as NIOSH-approved N95 respirators.
- Safety glasses with side shields or goggles to prevent quartz dust from getting into the eyes.
- Protective gloves and clothing to prevent skin contact with quartz.



Figure 1: OSHA

2. Avoid creating airborne dust.

Quartz dust can be harmful if inhaled. To prevent the creation of dust, workers should:

- Wet the quartz surface before cutting or grinding to reduce the amount of dust produced.
- Use cutting and grinding tools with water or a vacuum attachment to minimize dust exposure.
- Use local exhaust ventilation systems to capture dust at the source.
- Clean up dust and debris using a vacuum with a HEPA filter.

3. Work in a well-ventilated area

When working with quartz, it is essential to work in a well-ventilated area to reduce the risk of inhaling quartz dust. Adequate ventilation can be achieved by:

- Opening windows and doors to allow fresh air to circulate.

- Using fans or air movers to increase air flow.
- Using a ventilation system that provides a constant flow of fresh air.
- Using a filtering HEPA system to remove particles from the air.

4. Be aware of the latest OSHA Guidelines

Under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful working conditions for their workers.

<https://www.osha.gov/silica-crystalline>

5. Proper Handling and Storage

Quartz can be heavy and difficult to move, so proper handling techniques should be used to avoid injury. Workers should:

- Use mechanical aids such as forklift clamps or carts to move large pieces of quartz.
- Store quartz slabs in a secure area to prevent them from falling and causing injury.
- Follow proper lifting techniques to avoid back injuries.

6. Emergency Procedures

In case of an emergency, workers should know the location of emergency equipment, such as first aid kits and fire extinguishers. They should also be aware of the emergency procedures and evacuation plans. Workers should listen to their body. If a worker feels unwell, seek medical attention right away. If quartz dust should get in a workers eyes, flush with water for several minutes.

Working with quartz can be hazardous if the proper safety measures are not taken. By following the guidelines outlined in this safety document, workers can minimize the risks associated with working with quartz and ensure a safe working environment. This document can be superseded by OSHA and other federal agencies. Please make sure you and your workers are up to date on the latest safety rules and regulations.

Industry Information

The Marble Institute of America is a trade association of and for the stone industry. They have developed training videos, guides, and other training resources to assist in protecting their workers from exposure to respirable crystalline silica. Visit www.marble-institute/silica to learn more.