Silica Control Plan

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Purpose and Scope

This Silica Control Plan sets out the systems, controls, and responsibilities required to manage the risks associated with respirable crystalline silica (RCS) across all operations of [Company Name]. It is designed to support compliance with Australian work health and safety legislation and relevant Codes of Practice, and to protect workers, contractors, and others who may be exposed to silica dust.

This plan applies to all workplaces and activities under the management or control of [Company Name], including but not limited to:

- Concrete and formwork operations
- Flooring and tiling (including cutting, grinding and polishing)
- Demolition (structural and non-structural)
- Shopfitting and cabinet making (including engineered stone, benchtops and joinery)
- Building and construction (residential, commercial, industrial)
- Civil construction and earthworks (roads, bridges, utilities, bulk earthworks)
- Mining and resources (surface and underground operations, processing plants)

The plan covers all workers, including direct employees, labour hire, apprentices, subcontractors, and visitors who may be exposed to silica dust.

Definitions

Key Terms

- **Crystalline silica**: A naturally occurring mineral found in materials such as concrete, bricks, tiles, stone, sand, mortar and engineered stone.
- **Respirable crystalline silica (RCS)**: Very fine silica dust particles that are small enough to penetrate deep into the lungs when inhaled.
- **Silica dust**: Dust that contains respirable crystalline silica generated during activities such as cutting, grinding, drilling, polishing, crushing or sweeping materials containing silica.
- **PCBU**: Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking, as defined in WHS legislation.
- **Reasonably practicable**: What is reasonably able to be done to ensure health and safety, taking into account likelihood, degree of harm, knowledge, availability and suitability of ways to eliminate or minimise risk, and cost.
- **High-risk crystalline silica work**: Work involving silica that meets the criteria defined in relevant WHS regulations or Codes of Practice (e.g. engineered stone processing, uncontrolled dry cutting of materials with high silica content).
- **Exposure standard**: The workplace exposure standard for respirable crystalline silica as prescribed in current WHS regulations.

- **HEPA filter**: High Efficiency Particulate Air filter capable of capturing very fine particles, including RCS.

Roles and Responsibilities

PCBU / Officers

[Company Name] as the PCBU, and its officers, must exercise due diligence to ensure that appropriate resources, processes and controls are in place to manage silica risks. This includes:

- Providing and maintaining safe systems of work for all silica-related tasks
- Ensuring adequate resourcing for engineering controls, health monitoring, and training
- Ensuring silica risk assessments are completed, reviewed and updated
- Ensuring consultation with workers and health and safety representatives (HSRs)
- Monitoring compliance with this Silica Control Plan and WHS legislation

Managers and Supervisors

Managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing this plan at operational level. Their duties include:

- Identifying silica-generating tasks in their areas of control
- Ensuring task-specific risk assessments and Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) are prepared and followed
- Ensuring appropriate engineering controls (e.g. water suppression, on-tool extraction) are provided and maintained
- Verifying that workers use controls correctly and consistently
- Organising air monitoring and health monitoring where required
- Stopping work where controls are not in place or are ineffective

Health and Safety Personnel

WHS advisers, coordinators or safety officers are responsible for:

- Supporting managers with silica risk assessments and control selection
- Coordinating air monitoring programs and interpreting results
- Maintaining records of exposure assessments, health monitoring and training
- Reviewing incidents, non-conformances and near misses involving silica
- Providing advice on new or improved control technologies

Workers and Contractors

All workers and contractors have responsibilities to: