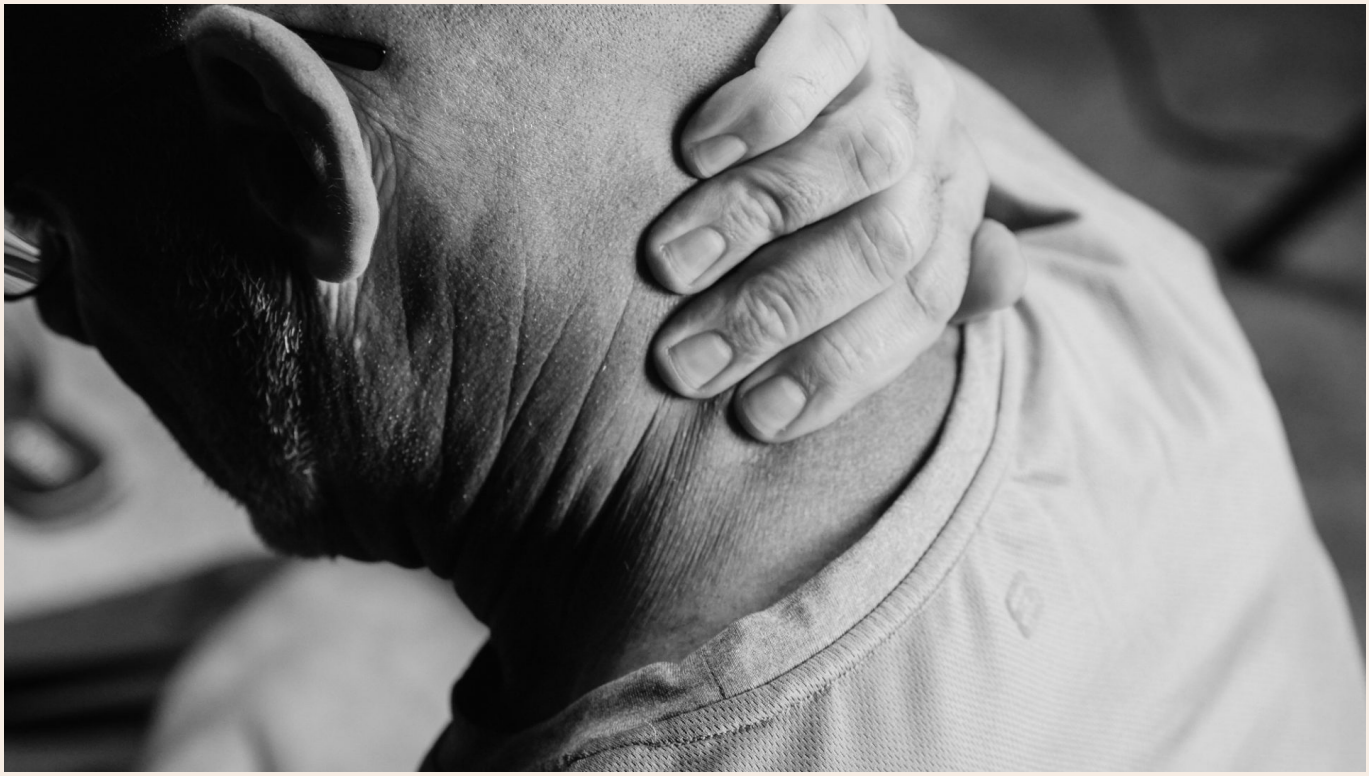


What to do if you have been exposed to silica dust?

What is Silicosis?

Silicosis is a lung diseased caused by inhaling silica dust. Exposure to silica dust can lead to the development of the following dependent on the level of exposure:

1. lung cancer;
2. Silicosis;
3. Kidney disease and
4. Chronic pulmonary disease.

Silicosis is irreversible scaring and stiffening of the lungs which can be caused by one breathing in a particle which is smaller than a tiny grain of sand.

How can you be exposed to silica dust?

Expose to silica dust can occur daily through work practices. People who work in the following occupations having higher exposure rates:

1. Constructions workers
2. Miners
3. Builders
4. Engineers

Or those who work in areas where there has been (or continues to be):

- Sand blasting or casting;
- Dry cutting / installing kitchen bench tops;
- Bricklaying;
- Stonemasonery;
- Paving, surfacing or cement finishing;
- Demolition work;
- Manufacture of glass, ceramics, brick, concrete, tiles or metal machinery.

With the increase popularity of composite stone materials such as Caesarstone, Silestone for benchtops in both domestic and commercial premises in the past 10 to 15 years, individuals who work in these areas have increased their exposure associated with the fabricating of bench tops by cutting, drilling or polishing.

What are your employee rights if you have been exposed to silica dust?

Work health and safety legislation in Australia is relatively stringent, and is designed to protect workers against risks to their health and safety, such as that arising from potential exposure to silica dust. Sadly, however, not all employers are diligent in controlling this risk, and there are

circumstances where staff who have raised concerns about exposure to silica dust in their employment have been dismissed for doing so.

If you have any concerns about the measures your employer is taking to protect you against exposure to silica dust, you can contact Safework SA for advice, or you can speak to our **lawyers experienced in dust diseases** to discuss your legal options.

Furthermore, the *Fair Work Act* prohibits "adverse action" being taken against an employee because they have made a complaint or raised concerns about work health and safety issues. Penalties can be imposed upon employers, should they take adverse action against an employee (such as dismissing the employee or issuing them with a formal warning) simply because that employee has raised issues about work health and safety.

Have you been exposed to silica dust?

If you have been exposed to silica dust in the past or are currently exposed, but currently do not display any symptoms or have not been diagnosed by a medical professional, you can **contact Andersons Solicitors** and request to be placed on a database which is monitored by our team of professionals who will continue to contact you in the future.

If you have been diagnosed with silicosis or any dust related disease then we recommend that you make an urgent appointment with one of our lawyers to explore your legal options regarding **dust disease compensation claims**.

> Work health and safety legislation in Australia is designed to protect workers against health risks such as that arising from potential exposure to silica dust.