

## IDENTIFY THE HAZARD | HANDLE IT SAFELY | DISPOSE OF IT RESPONSIBLY

**PURPOSE OF STRATEGY:** a coordinated approach for the safe handling of hazardous dust including asbestos, silica, wood and other dusts to protect workers from illness, injury and death.

**AIM:** workers are protected from hazardous dust exposure through coordination of key prevention strategies and consistent delivery of best-practice advice and regulation.

**FOCUS AREAS:** asbestos, silica, wood and other dusts.

### FOCUS AREAS

#### ASBESTOS

Found in 3,000 products prior to banning in 2003.

- building trades
- demolition
- mechanical trades
- licensed asbestos removal
- DIY renovators
- home handyman



Around 4,000 Australians die yearly from asbestos-related diseases, one of the highest rates in the world.

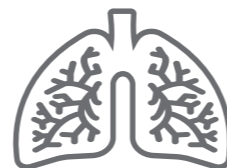


NSW Building & Construction WHS Sector Plan  
National Strategic Plan for Asbestos  
Awareness & Management 2019-2023

#### SILICA

Found in natural and manufactured stone, cement and concrete.

- building trades
- foundries
- manufactured stone
- manufacturing
- infrastructure and tunnelling
- landscaping



Significant increase in silicosis cases since 2017.

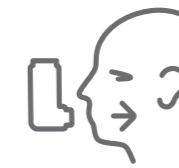


NSW Chemicals Strategy 2017-2022  
NSW Building & Construction WHS Sector Plan  
NSW Manufacturing WHS Sector Plan

#### WOOD AND OTHER DUSTS

Soft wood/hard wood, treated timber (chemicals), organic dusts, MDF (formaldehyde).

- building trades
- forestry and timber milling
- manufacturing



Causes nasal cancers, asthma and lung impairment, nose and eye irritation.



NSW Chemicals Strategy 2017-2022  
NSW Building & Construction WHS Sector Plan

### OBJECTIVES



Deliver WHS Roadmap targets



Secure compliance



Support and deliver world-first research

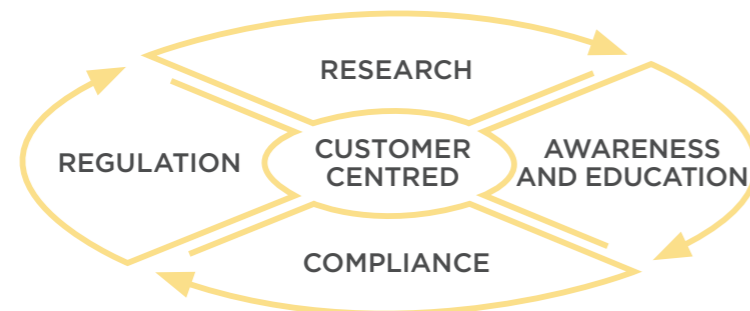


Deliver best practice dust control education



Collaborate with our stakeholders

### STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES



**CUSTOMER-CENTRED:** activities are designed with the customer at the core and undertaken in partnership with industry.

**RESEARCH:** supporting and delivering research to increase industry knowledge and deliver innovative WHS solutions.

**AWARENESS AND EDUCATION:** to equip workplaces with the knowledge and understanding to improve worker safety.

**COMPLIANCE:** enforcing WHS regulations to ensure workplaces meet their obligations to workers' health and safety.

**REGULATION:** reviewing and enhancing WHS regulations to ensure they protect workers.



For more information and resources visit: [www.safework.nsw.gov.au/dust-strategy](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/dust-strategy)

The NSW Dust Strategy 2020-2022 coordinates SafeWork NSW's dust exposure prevention activities, ensuring consistent application of best practice principles and controls relevant to different dust types.

The complexity of disease-related harms include long latencies, conflicting attitudes and beliefs, complex regulations and competing for priorities in the workplace with more immediate risks to safety. These challenges require a customer-centred and multi-pronged response.

CONTROL MEASURES	DUST		
	ASBESTOS	SILICA	WOOD AND OTHER DUSTS
Substitute materials	✓	✓	✓
Train workers	✓	✓	✓
Ventilate work area	✗	✓	✓
Negative air pressure	✓	✗	✗
Wet cut	✗	✓	✗
Dust capture	✓	✓	✓
Masks and PPE	✓	✓	✓
Vacuum class M	✗	✓	✓
Vacuum class H	✓	✓	✓
Wet clean-up	✓	✓	✓
Licensed contractors	✓	✗	✗

**AIR MONITORING:** personal air monitoring for workers exposed to silica/wood dust and exposure, control and clearance monitoring for friable asbestos removal.

**HEALTH MONITORING:** regular health monitoring where silica exposure poses a significant health risk and every two years for asbestos removalists and asbestos assessors.

## ASBESTOS

### Workplace Exposure Standard (WES)

- 0.1 fibres/mL.
- 0.01 fibres/mL (clearance level after removal).

### Compliance

- Assessment of new and renewal asbestos licence holders.
- Verification activities to improve compliance of asbestos licence holders.
- Auditing of Registered Training Organisations who deliver asbestos removal training.
- Enforcement actions.
- Licencing reforms to enable simpler licencing processes and improved customer service.

### Awareness and Education

- Annual Asbestos Awareness Campaign.
- Codes of Practice:
  - How to safely remove asbestos
  - How to manage and control asbestos in the workplace.
- Video Safety Alerts including language translations.
- Improving knowledge and influencing behaviour around asbestos exposure risks in the workplace.

### Stakeholder Engagement

- National, state and cross-jurisdictional working groups including:
  - NSW Asbestos Co-ordination Committee
  - Demolition and Asbestos Consultative Committee.

## SILICA

### Workplace Exposure Standard (WES)

- 0.05 mg/m<sup>3</sup> 8-hr TWA.

### Compliance

- 9,000 business interactions under the Hazardous Chemicals Roadmap Project (silica is a top priority chemical).
- Enhanced model WHS laws including halving WES to 0.05 mg/m<sup>3</sup>.
- On-the-spot fines for uncontrolled dry cutting manufactured stone.
- Silicosis a notifiable condition.
- On-the-spot fines for persons conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU) who fail to notify of an adverse health monitoring report.

### Awareness and Education

- Targeted mass media industry campaigns.
- Silica symposium, regional roadshows and events.
- Video Safety Alerts (including language translations and task/control specific videos).
- \$500 small business rebate.
- Silica Infrastructure Working Group.
- World-leading research into real-time silica dust detection devices.

## WOOD AND OTHER DUSTS

### Workplace Exposure Standard (WES)

- 1 mg/m<sup>3</sup> 8hr-TWA (hard wood).
- 5mg/m<sup>3</sup> 8hr-TWA (soft wood).
- 1.2 mg/m<sup>3</sup> 8-hr TWA (formaldehyde – MDF).
- 10 mg/m<sup>3</sup> 8hr-TWA (dusts not otherwise classified\*).

\* Where no specific WES has been assigned and the substance is both of inherently low toxicity and free from toxic impurities.

### Compliance

- Exposure to airborne contaminants (i.e. dust) is kept to a minimum and never above the WES.

As well as the health hazard of breathing in wood dust:

- MDF/fibre/particle board contains formaldehyde and resins.
- Treated timbers contain copper chrome arsenate (CCA) and other hazardous chemicals.
- Some hardwoods contain harmful tannins and resins.

### Awareness and Education

- Wood dust fact sheet.
- Code of Practice for Safe Handling of Timber Preservatives and Treated Timber.
- Working with and handling treated timber safely (EPA).
- Workplace management of respiratory conditions including asthma.

 For more information and resources visit: [www.safework.nsw.gov.au/dust-strategy](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au/dust-strategy)