



**Mining & Quarrying**  
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH &  
SAFETY COMMITTEE

# MAQHSC Safety Snapshot

## Respirable crystalline silica



## Silicosis

Silica dust particles may become trapped in lung tissue causing inflammation, scarring and eventually reducing the lung's ability to take in oxygen. Symptoms of silicosis can include shortness of breath, cough and fatigue and may not be obviously attributable to silica.

## Develop written safe cleaning procedures

Training people in appropriate cleaning methods  
Write a cleaning schedule for offices and vehicles

## Use an industrial-rated vacuum

Domestic-rated vacuums, even those fitted with HEPA filtration, cannot guaranteed a suitable level of protection and are not designed or rated to be used in commercial environments.

## Select the right class for the type of dust

Industrial vacuums rated for use with hazardous dusts are classed as M or H.

## REMOVING QUARRY DUST SAFELY FROM OFFICES, LUNCHROOMS, LIGHT VEHICLES & OPERATOR CABINS

Good housekeeping can reduce exposure to silica dust in quarry buildings load-shifting plant and light vehicles, usually raised from floor level by foot traffic as a secondary exposure risk.

Using an M or H-class industrial vacuum followed by a wet-wipe of any surfaces is recommended to reduce dust build-up and recirculation. It is important that vacuums used are regularly maintained, inspected, and tested. .

### What standards apply?

M and H-class vacuum's have features which improve safety when cleaning medium and high hazard dusts including:

- the safe removal of dust collection bags
- an alarm indicator when the air flow falls below 20 metres per second
- the prevention of accidental entry and release of hazardous dust when not in use

Vacuum cleaners used for hazardous dusts need to be certified as complying AS/NZS 60335.2.69

The vacuum cleaner must display the medium (M) or high hazard (H) class symbol, the model type, manufacturer's name and trademark.



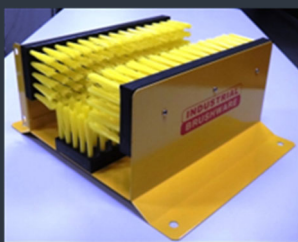


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(Worksafe Qld.)



Boot cleaner

(Industrial Brush Ware)s

## Dusty clothes and footwear

An industrial M or H class vacuum cleaner can be used to remove dust from clothes and uniforms before work periods in the office or prior to breaks:

- by positioning these units at the exits of dusty work areas, you can encourage workers to vacuum their clothes before entry.

*Safe Work Australia, National Guidance - Working with silica and silica containing products (Feb 202)*

## Maintenance, inspection, and testing

H-Class vacuum cleaners must be maintained, inspected, and tested by a competent person either:

- in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.
- in accordance with a competent person's recommendations, if there are no recommendations by the manufacturer.

## Frequency of testing

An inspection needs to be performed at least annually to inspect the filters for damage, check the air tightness of the appliance and ensure the proper function of the control mechanism. The appliance's filter efficiency should be tested at least annually by the methods described in section AA.22.201.2 of the standard.

Consult with the supplier regarding extra-long hosing, to create an overhead swiveling beam for access to both sides of operator cabins.

## Electrical safety

Ensure that the vacuum has been included in the site test and tag register, has a current tag attached to the power cord and use cable suspension hooks and cable protector tunnels.



(Blackwoods)