

Businesses ordered to stop work with engineered stone after failing safety inspections

- HSE serves first Prohibition Notices as part of nationwide health and safety inspection campaign
- Enforcement action taken to protect workers from deadly silica dust
- Four companies ordered to stop work after visits from HSE inspectors
- It comes after guidance issued telling industry to stop dry-cutting engineered stone

Four companies have been ordered to stop working with engineered stone as part of a crackdown to protect workers from deadly dust.

The companies received prohibition notices (PNs) following visits by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspectors. The notices are enforcement actions that require the businesses to stop the work immediately and take steps to improve safety. Each of the firms was found to have had a lack of control measures in place to keep employees safe while working with engineered stone.

HSE launched a package of measures last month to protect workers from the dangers of engineered stone dust. It followed concern about the deaths of young workers from silicosis – a deadly-but-preventable lung disease caused by breathing in respirable crystalline silica (RCS). A nationwide inspection campaign was launched to run through 2026, and inspections have resulted in these four enforcement notices being served as of the end of May.

HSE enforcement notices are published approximately five weeks after they are served to account for the appeals process and internal quality assurance.

Publication of new [guidance](#) from HSE made it clear that dry cutting of engineered stone is unacceptable, and the regulator plans to conduct more than 1,000 visits at which enforcement action to be taken against those failing to meet the required standards.

Harvey Wild, Head of Operations at the Health and Safety Executive, said: “Our inspectors are visiting businesses across Great Britain to ensure that employers have implemented the correct controls to keep their employees safe.

“We have stopped dangerous work with engineered stone in four workplaces due to serious failures in providing the correct controls.

“Silicosis is incurable, but it is entirely preventable. No worker should lose their life to a lung disease caused by their job, and that is why we have taken this action. If businesses ensure the right controls are being used correctly, then the risks of engineered stone and silicosis can be safely managed. Where these are not in place, workers will be at risk.”

Minister for Social Security and Disability Sir Stephen Timms said:

“Every worker deserves to come home safe, without fear of losing their life to a preventable, deadly lung disease caused by their job.

“The enforcement action taken by HSE sends a clear message that putting workers at risk of silicosis – an entirely preventable but devastating disease – is completely unacceptable and there will be consequences.

“I urge all businesses working with engineered stone to follow HSE’s guidance now. There is no excuse for exposing workers to unnecessary risk.”

The dangers of engineered stone include silicosis, a deadly-but-preventable lung disease caused by breathing in silica dust that is released when stone is being processed. HSE’s research found that dry fabrication typically results in exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) five to ten times higher than wet methods for processing products. It also found that lower-content silica engineered stone is available at the same quality, meaning businesses can switch to less dangerous products.

This evidence led to HSE acting decisively to ensure those controls become universal across the industry, and to provide clarity to businesses and workers, HSE has published its first-ever COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) [guidance sheet](#) specifically for engineered stone.

HSE’s guidance sets out in plain English what employers must do: switch to engineered stone with a low silica content; use on-tool water suppression, control mist; provide appropriate respiratory protective equipment (RPE); and carry out regular health surveillance.

□HSE’s first instances of enforcement action also addressed a range of other failures including Health Surveillance; provision of suitable respiratory protective equipment (RPE); provision of suitable local exhaust ventilation; and machinery guarding.

To support dutyholders HSE provides a range of advice and information for fabricators, installers, and distributors of engineered stone – including managers and supervisors. Visit [Working engineered stone: Control silica risk – HSE](#)

Further Information:

- The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety.
- HSE’s new guidance for engineered stone outlines the controls that should be in place when working with the material, which effectively rules out dry-cutting, grinding and polishing, unless businesses can demonstrate an equally effective or better control is in place. This is not a new law, or a formal prohibition as would be achieved with changes to legislation.
- The new [COSHH guidance for engineered stone](#) is available at [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk)
- Respirable crystalline silica (RCS) dust is invisible to the naked eye

and can penetrate deep into the lungs, causing silicosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and lung cancer.

- HSE's 1,000+ inspection programme will run through the 2026/27 period.
- HSE is also working with manufacturers, suppliers and importers to encourage the supply of lower-silica engineered stone products, which research indicates are a viable alternative to high-silica materials. Manufacturers have a legal duty under Section 6 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 to provide adequate information about the risks associated with their products and the controls required to work with them safely.
- Further details on the latest HSE news releases are available at [hse.gov.uk](https://www.hse.gov.uk).
- Further details on the latest HSE notices are available at [Public register of enforcement notices](#).
- To account for the appeals process and internal quality assurance, enforcement notices are published approximately 5 weeks after they are served.