

“No-one is in charge of health and safety” – stone company fined after workshop floor covered in hazardous dust

- HSE inspectors left stunned by employee concerns
- HSE guidance on artificial stone dust recently updated

A company that manufactures popular stone kitchen worktops has been fined £60,000 after it repeatedly failed to protect workers from exposure to hazardous dust.

Inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) visited Inova Stone Ltd nine times over a six year period, and found little or no improvement across several areas of concern.

HSE inspectors were left stunned after visiting the company's premises in Slough in May 2021 when employees told them that 'no-one is in charge of health and safety'. That visit had come about after concerns had been raised about unsafe working practices. Inspectors soon saw the complacency for themselves, after identifying several breaches of health and safety law, including a failure to control exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS).



The workshop floor was caked in dust, suggesting an absence of effective controls.

Stone worktops are becoming increasingly popular in home kitchens. Processing stone, including engineered stone, by cutting, chiselling and polishing, can create dust that contains airborne particle that carry RCS.



Shoe/boot prints are clearly visible in the dust on the workshop floor

RCS dust is invisibly fine and can reach deep inside the lung. It can cause permanent lung damage before symptoms develop. Stone workers are at risk of exposure to airborne particles of stone dust containing RCS, with the risk higher when exposure is prolonged and uncontrolled. Over time, breathing in these silica particles can cause irreversible, life-changing and often fatal respiratory conditions such as silicosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer.

- HSE recently updated its guidance for those working on stone worktops – including a helpful guide of do's and don'ts here: [HSE Guidance for those installing stone worktops](#).

As well as failing to protect workers from the potentially deadly dust, HSE inspectors also found Inova Stone Ltd routinely allowed them to use unguarded machinery. In addition, the company also had heavy stone slabs not being stored safely, putting workers at risk of serious injury.



Heavy stone slabs were not being stored safely

As a result of the inspection, the company was served with four improvement notices, with the resulting HSE investigation revealing similar action had also been taken four years earlier, in 2017.

Inova Stone Ltd of Willow Road, Colnbrook, Slough, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act, as well as three charges for failure to comply with an improvement notice. The company was fined £60,000 and ordered to pay £7,363 costs at Staines Magistrates Court on 20 May 2025.

After the hearing, HSE Principal Inspector Karen Morris said: “Inova Stone Ltd failed to comply with legal notices requiring them to make improvements and repeatedly showed a lack of commitment to managing health and safety.

“We were stunned when employees told us that ‘no-one was in charge of health and safety’.

“After being provided with advice and guidance over several years, the company had plenty of opportunities to comply with the law, yet they consistently failed to do so.

“The fine imposed should send a clear message to employers that the risks from working with engineered stone must be taken extremely seriously.”

This HSE prosecution was brought by HSE enforcement lawyers Jayne Wilson and Rebecca Schwartz as well as paralegal Melissa Wardle.

Notes to editors:

1. [The Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) is Britain’s national regulator for workplace health and safety. We are dedicated to protecting people and places, and helping everyone lead safer and healthier lives.
2. More information about the [legislation](#) referred to in this case is available.
3. Further details on the latest [HSE news releases](#) is available.
4. Updated [HSE guidance for those working on stone worktops](#) is available.
5. HSE does not pass sentences, set guidelines or collect any fines imposed. Relevant sentencing guidelines must be followed unless the court is satisfied that it would be contrary to the interests of justice to do so. The sentencing guidelines for health and safety offences can be found [here](#).