

# **CONTROL OF EXPOSURE TO SILICA** **DUST POLICY**



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# **CONTROL OF EXPOSURE TO SILICA DUST POLICY**

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## **1. Introduction**

The Kilmarnock Leisure Centre Trust (KLCT) has responsibility for compliance with the Health and Safety at work etc. Act 1974 and all associated legislation to ensure the safety of all visitors to the Galleon Centre including all employees, contractors and customers.

Failure to follow appropriate guidelines and adopt adequate safe working practices, in accordance with the Health and Safety at work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 is likely to lead to prosecution. Associated Legislation is the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) (as amended).

This policy has been developed to identify when exposure to silica dust may cause harm and what steps can be taken to protect employees from the risk.

## **2. Policy Statement**

- 2.1 The Policy will apply, without exception, to the Centre as a whole and all individuals employed or contracted by KLCT.
- 2.2 Responsibility for the implementation of this Policy will rest with the General Manager.
- 2.3 This Policy will follow the guidance and recommendations in the publication issued by the Health and Safety Executive – Control of Exposure to Silica Dust – A Guide for Employees.

## **3. Scope**

This policy applies to the Galleon Centre at Titchfield Street, Kilmarnock, KA1 1QY and takes into account all employees, contractors and self-employed people.

## **4. What is Silica**

Silica is a natural substance found in most rocks, sand, clay and in products such as bricks and concrete. Silica is also used as a filler in some plastics. These materials create dust when they are cut, sanded, carved etc. and some of this dust may be fine enough to breathe deeply into your lungs and cause harm to your health. The fine dust is called Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) and is too fine to see with normal lighting.

## **5. Possible Areas of Exposure**

Aside from the obvious areas of dust being created when cutting, grinding, drilling, sanding or chiselling stone/concrete (unusual & extremely rare activities in the Galleon Centre) there is the possibility that dust containing RCS could be found in the Skate Hire Area during and after Skate Sharpening/Grinding.

## 6. How RCS Can Harm Your Health

Breathing in RCS can cause the following lung diseases;

**Silicosis:** Makes breathing more difficult and increases the risk of lung infections. Silicosis usually follows exposure to RCS over many years, but extremely high exposure can lead rapidly to ill health.

**Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD):** COPD is a group of lung diseases, including bronchitis and emphysema, resulting in severe breathlessness, prolonged coughing and chronic disability. It may be caused by breathing in any fine dusts including RCS. It can be very disabling and is a leading cause of death.

**Lung Cancer:** Heavy and prolonged exposure to RCS can cause lung cancer. When someone already has silicosis, there is an increased risk of lung cancer.

The health risks from RCS are insignificant when exposure to dust is adequately controlled – **no one needs to become ill through work activities.**

## 7. Compliance

In order to comply with current legislation KLCT will ensure that;

- Risks from exposure to RCS are controlled
- Information, instruction and training on the risk, and the action being taken to control the risk, will be provided.
- Suitable health surveillance will be provided if necessary
- A Risk Assessment is compiled.

### Controlling Risks from RCS

This assessment of risk will include;

- A brief survey of the workplace
- Ascertaining who may be exposed to RCS
- Ascertaining what is causing that exposure
- Estimating the time spent doing work that creates exposure. Begin to set priorities.
- Always maintaining equipment in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Working closely with our Insurers and Health & Safety advisors to measure dust levels in any areas of risk to ensure they remain well below the Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) (0.1mg/m<sup>3</sup> respirable dust averaged over 8 hours)
- Planning work schedules to minimise exposure and making sure exposures are well below the WEL.

- Always looking for ways of working that will avoid exposure.

## 8. Employee Responsibilities

All employees must wear appropriate PPE and follow all safe working practices including cleaning of equipment and surroundings where RCS may be apparent.

**DO NOT DRY SWEEP – ALWAYS USE A VACUUM OR WET CLEANING.  
DO NOT USE COMPRESSED AIR TO REMOVE DUST FROM CLOTHING.**

## 9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or earlier if research, evidence or a change in practice or legislation requires a review to be undertaken.