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27 May 2022

Dear extractive industry member,

I write to provide clarification regarding basalt material and its relationship with the new silica regulations.

Silica Regulations summary

On 15 Nov 2021 the Victorian Government introduced Part 4.5 Crystalline Silica to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations. These regulations contain general silica duties for all workplaces which come in to force on the 15th of May 2022. These general regulations include broad requirements for any workplace which manufacturers, supplies, or processes crystalline silica materials.

Crystalline silica is the crystalline form of silicon dioxide, or silica, a naturally occurring mineral that forms a major component of most rocks. A crystalline silica substance is defined in the Regulations as a substance which contains greater than 1% crystalline silica.

Information for Basalt quarries

While basalt may contain between 45% and 63% silica it is predominantly amorphous not crystalline. The crystalline silica component of Basalt is known to be less than 1% (WorkSafe website). As such the specific regulations regarding crystalline silica substances (such as analysis of material, provision of information to customers, provision of information to employees/job applicants) does not apply to extracting, processing, and selling basalt from quarries.

More information regarding silica in quarrying can be found;

- in the WorkSafe guidance document 'Dust containing crystalline silica in the extractive industry' available at www.worksafe.vic.gov.au
- CMPA Respirable Crystalline Silica Dust (RCSD) Management Guideline found at <https://cmpavic.asn.au/publications/support-sheets/>
- CCAA Industry guide 'Workplace Health & Safety Guideline - Management of Respirable Crystalline Silica in Quarries' available at <https://www.ccaa.com.au/> > Publications > Industry Guidelines

Kind regards,

Ben Wright

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Ben Wright", written over a white background.

Benjamin Wright
Manager of Earth Resources and Silica

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