

## Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS)

The potential for worker exposure to crystalline silica is widespread within mining and quarrying.

Very fine Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) is particularly harmful to workers. It can be generated during drilling, blasting, crushing, cutting and transporting.

The link following will take you to some recently released valuable information on RCS, including an information sheet from Dr Mary Obele, Occupational and Environmental Physician and GP.



[Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica \(RCS\)](#)

**WorkSafe data suggests that every year around 750 to 900 people die from work-related disease in New Zealand. About 80% of these are men. This is 15 times the number that die in accidents at work.**

### You need to ensure that:

1. You conduct Exposure Monitoring of workers to identify RCS exposure levels and where additional controls are needed.
2. Adequate controls are put in place including use of water on plant, stockpiles and roads, dry dust extraction, separation of workers from high exposure areas, and PPE – minimum P2 dust mask.
3. You conduct regular Health Surveillance (medical), including spirometry (lung capacity test) to monitor whether controls are adequate.
4. All workers are given information on health risks in the workplace including exposure to RCS.

Additional information can be found on the WorkSafe website

**Know of an incident or near miss? Please share the learnings with us.**