



Dust strategy 2023-24



Purpose of strategy

To continue to drive improvements in the workplace management of hazardous dusts and protect workers from harm.



Focus areas

Asbestos

Found extensively in older WA building products, contaminated sites, and naturally occurring in parts of the state.

Around 4,000 deaths per year in Australia are attributed to asbestos related diseases.

Our strategy supports the National Strategic Plan for Asbestos Awareness and Management

Silica

Found in natural and engineered stone, cement and concrete. People in building trades, foundries, stonemasons, infrastructure, tunnelling, mining and landscaping roles may be exposed.

There has been a rise in silicosis cases since 2017.

Our strategy supports outcomes of the National Dust Diseases Taskforce report and is intended to reduce excessive silica exposures in WA workers.

Other dusts

Lead, arsenic, nickel, wood and radioactive dusts are significant hazards in some WA workplaces. Lithium is an increasingly used mineral in WA.

Lead, arsenic and nickel are toxic, and radioactive dusts and some wood dusts may cause cancer.

Workers in the mining and timber industries may be exposed to these dusts.

Our strategy supports the control of these dusts to prevent chronic illnesses.



Strategic principles



Awareness and education



Compliance



Customer centric service



Objectives and compliance activities

Objectives	Activities		
	Asbestos	Silica	Other dusts
High levels of PCBU and worker awareness of the health risks of silica, asbestos and other dusts and how to comply with the applicable WHS laws	<p>General and targeted awareness campaigns about asbestos, using licence holder direct communication, social media and email formats.</p> <p>Development, updating and communication of educational resources, focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• management of asbestos containing materials (ACM) in situ• removal of ACM, and• management of naturally occurring asbestos and contaminated sites.	<p>General and targeted awareness campaigns about silica, using stakeholder direct communication, social media and email formats.</p> <p>Development, updating and communication of educational resources, focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe by design – choose a safer material instead of high silica engineered stone• Safe use of engineered stone in factory environment and on site• Controlling silica in construction work – concrete cutting and wall chasing• Dust management in assay laboratories• Controlling silica in quarrying, crushing and screening activities.	<p>Review/develop WorkSafe website information products on lead, arsenic, nickel, wood dust and lithium, including health monitoring information where applicable.</p> <p>Initial priority will be given to the metallic and semi-metallic dusts, with wood dust information to follow.</p>

Objectives	Activities		
	Asbestos	Silica	Other dusts
High levels of industry compliance with applicable WHS laws	<p>Enforce compliance where ACM is handled unsafely or is unlawfully removed by an unlicensed PCBU.</p> <p>Provide prompt and consistent customer service (e.g. response to enquiries and complaints).</p> <p>Conduct regular compliance checks on asbestos removal licence holders and licensed asbestos assessors.</p> <p>As part of routine inspections, check that duty holders have an appropriate asbestos management plan (for in situ and naturally occurring asbestos).</p> <p>Investigate reported exposure incidents to ensure adequate prevention measures have been implemented.</p> <p>Enforce the WHS laws using the appropriate compliance tools, consistent with WorkSafe's <u>compliance and enforcement policy</u>.</p> <p>Regularly review compliance data and monitor trends.</p>	<p>Notified health monitoring reports indicating excessive silica exposure will be followed up by a site visit where practicable.</p> <p>Once data is available via a national registry of dust diseases, notified diseases will be reviewed and site visits to the workplace where exposure occurred conducted where practicable.</p> <p>Provide prompt and consistent customer service (e.g. response to enquiries and complaints).</p> <p>Enforce the WHS laws using the appropriate compliance tools, consistent with WorkSafe's <u>compliance and enforcement policy</u>.</p> <p>Ensure WA suppliers of engineered stone are meeting labelling and safety data sheets requirements.</p> <p>Require duty holders to conduct air monitoring on a risk basis. Inspectors will conduct a limited amount of air monitoring to verify industry data, to enable exposures to be well understood.</p> <p>Encourage mine operators to continue to submit all sampling results into the mine worker exposure database and investigate exceedances.</p> <p>Regularly review compliance data and monitor trends, with a focus on engineered stone and mining.</p>	<p>Conduct targeted inspections in industries with significant potential for nickel, lead or arsenic exposure.</p> <p>Provide prompt and consistent customer service (e.g. response to enquiries and complaints).</p> <p>Enforce the WHS laws using the appropriate compliance tools, consistent with WorkSafe's <u>compliance and enforcement policy</u>.</p> <p>Investigate notified biological exceedances of nickel, lead, arsenic or other toxic dusts.</p> <p>Regularly review compliance data and monitor trends with respect to dusts of concern.</p> <p>Ensure compliant radiation management plans are in place for mines where required.</p>

Objectives	Activities		
	Asbestos	Silica	Other dusts
Ongoing collaboration with stakeholders to work towards our purpose	<p>Continue collaboration with Local Government Authorities and state government agencies.</p> <p>Deliver a Registered Medical Practitioners Forum on a regular basis.</p> <p>Receive and provide information to professional associations, for example FAMANZ.</p> <p>Provide periodic updates to stakeholders such as the WHS Commission, MPAC and CISAC.</p>	<p>Deliver a Registered Medical Practitioners Forum on a regular basis.</p> <p>Deliver an educational webinar or forum for industry.</p> <p>Receive and provide information to professional associations, for example the AIOH.</p> <p>Provide periodic updates to stakeholders such as the WHS Commission, MPAC and CISAC.</p>	<p>Liaise with relevant industry associations.</p> <p>Receive and provide information to professional associations, for example the AIOH.</p> <p>Provide periodic updates to stakeholders such as the WHS Commission, MPAC and CISAC.</p>
Build WorkSafe's capacity as a regulator with respect to asbestos, silica and other dusts	<p>New inspector training session.</p> <p>Inspector skills development session.</p> <p>Promote interactions between asbestos specialists and industry teams within WorkSafe</p> <p>Professional development opportunities for WorkSafe's specialists.</p> <p>Maintain equipment and skills to permit inspectorate to conduct verification of controls testing.</p> <p>Commence developing an efficient system to permit submission of health monitoring reports to the regulator, review by the Inspectorate and monitoring of trends to inform compliance work.</p>	<p>New inspector training session.</p> <p>Inspector skills development session.</p> <p>Promote interactions between occupational hygiene specialists and industry teams within WorkSafe.</p> <p>Professional development opportunities for WorkSafe's specialists.</p> <p>Maintain equipment and skills to permit inspectorate to conduct verification of controls testing.</p> <p>Commence developing an efficient system to permit submission of health monitoring reports to the regulator, review by the Inspectorate and monitoring of trends to inform compliance work.</p>	<p>Information provided to inspectors based on team/directorate business needs.</p> <p>Maintain equipment and skills to permit inspectorate to conduct verification of controls testing.</p> <p>Commence developing an efficient system to permit submission of health monitoring reports to the regulator, review by the Inspectorate and monitoring of trends to inform compliance work.</p>



Evaluation and reporting

WorkSafe is committed to evaluating and reporting on this Strategy, to inform stakeholders and adjust the approach as needed. A progress report will be published at the 12 month point, and a final report at the 24 month point.