

# Dust toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Dust.



[Download a Dust toolbox talk pdf](#)

Dusts can cause chronic or irreversible respiratory conditions. Some dusts such as respirable crystalline silica can cause Silicosis, certain hard wood dusts are known to be carcinogenic and other dusts can cause asthma and irritation of the airways. In this toolbox we discuss ways to minimise your dust exposure.

## Why run a Dust Toolbox Talk?

- To get an understanding on how to reduce and minimise exposure from dusts, by improving awareness and training.

## There are 2 types of dusts that are of concern:

- Respirable – small particles that can enter the lungs and small air sacs (alveoli).
- Inhalable – larger or heavier particles that get trapped in the nose, mouth or throat.

## How much dust is hazardous to health?

It depends on the dust you're exposed to. For some dusts there are Workplace Exposure Standards (WES) to provide guides on acceptable levels of dust exposure.

## Effects of dust to health:

- Eye irritation
- Skin irritation
- Irritation of the stomach and intestines if swallowed
- Respiratory conditions

## **Work activities that can create dust:**

- Dry cutting e.g. paving stones, concrete, bench tops
- Dry sweeping and compressed air
- Crushing and screening rock
- Emptying dust bags into skips and other containers
- Milling, grinding, sanding, sand-blasting or other similar operations
- Stockpiling large volumes of materials such as soil, sand, grains, seeds and flour

## **How to reduce dust exposure:**

- Segregating or enclosing the potentially dusty processes if possible
- Wet cutting or grinding
- On tool dust extraction
- Use less harmful materials
- Local exhaust ventilation (LEV)
- Enclosing material storage areas
- Get fit tested for a tight-fitting respirator
- PPE – select the right PPE for the work
- Washing facilities and good standards of cleanliness

## **Key takeaways:**

- *Dust can significantly affect your health including irreversible injury*
- *Be mindful of work activities that can create dusts*
- *There are multiple ways to reduce dust exposure*

[See all our toolbox talk topics here](#)

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