

POLYCOR SAFETY GUIDE

RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING
AND CUTTING NATURAL STONE.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

This guide has been developed in order to educate and encourage our customers to establish and maintain a safe working environment.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

Here are the essentials for personal protective equipment:

- Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes
- Wear steel toe boots to protect from crush injuries
- Use hearing protection if noise levels exceed 85dBA
- Use respirators where required
- Use hard hats when instructed to

SLAB HANDLING

Stone is heavy. Don't take this lightly and follow our recommendations on slab handling.

- Secure slabs to prevent from falling
- Use caution when removing one slab from a bundle
- Avoid getting beneath suspended loads
- Always stay on the opposite ends of the slabs during transport
- Periodically inspect storage racks to transport material

MACHINE & EQUIPMENT

- Make sure water is flowing before operating your saw
- Do not leave equipment running unattended
- Make sure all appropriate machine guards are in place prior to starting the machine
- Wear safety glasses and hearing protection as required
- Secure long hair and do not wear loose clothing or jewelry

ELECTRICAL HAZARD

To prevent electrocution or electrical shock, follow these cautions:

- Use grounded electrical equipment
- Route electrical cords overhead to avoid tripping
- Do not allow power cords to come in contact with water
- Make sure adequate floor drainage is in place
- Always check for frayed cords and replace them immediately.

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

- Read and adhere to instructions on the Safety Data Sheet (SDS) specified for the material you are using
- Work in areas with adequate ventilation
- Wear appropriate gloves and aprons to avoid chemical contact with skin
- Use safety glasses to protect your eyes
- Familiarize yourself with the location of the nearest eye wash and shower station
- Always label secondary chemical containers to clearly identify contents

AIRBORN DUST

As with any building material, whether natural stone, engineered quartz, plywood or MDF, cutting and fabricating creates airborne particulates that can have adverse health effects with prolonged exposure. Once in their finished and installed state they pose no hazard in and of themselves. Quartz and granite for example have silica, MDF has formaldehyde and PVC has dioxine to name a few of the most common building materials used in residential construction.

Let's explore these two most common in stones: **Crystalline Silica** and **Asbestiform Actinolite**.

CRYSTALLINE SILICA

Crystalline Silica is a natural mineral that is part of the stone. Cutting, grinding, polishing and drilling can produce airborne exposure to workers.

Silicosis, a progressive and irreversible lung disease, can develop from inhaling excessive amounts of crystalline silica. This condition is potentially disabling and in some cases fatal. To reduce silicosis, you should do the following:

- Reduce airborne silica dust by using wet processes and equipment to suppress airborne dust.
- Floor drainage and wet boots may be required in these areas. Electrical hazards in wet areas can be avoided through the use of pneumatic tools.
- Do not dry sweep. Follow company protocols when cleaning the shop by using a wet method.
- Do not blow dust off yourself with compressed air.
- Wash hands thoroughly prior to meal breaks.
- Do not eat or drink in the work area.
- To protect yourself and your family, change into clean clothing in a clean area. Take coveralls off slowly. Use a HEPA vacuum to clean clothes, do not shake dust off clothes.
- Respirators may be necessary where engineering controls are not available for a particular task, or if engineering controls, such as wet pneumatic tools or local exhaust ventilation, do not adequately control dust.
- Consider staggering workstation positions to avoid exposing other workers to grinding dust.

ASBESTIFORM ACTINOLITE

It is important to remind you of the possibility that on rare occasions, soapstone may rarely have naturally occurring minimal traces of asbestolite. Soapstone is known to rarely contain veins containing this actinolite, which comes in two geologic habits: non-asbestiform and asbestiform.

The asbestos form of actinolite is easily distinguished from the non-asbestos form in that the asbestos form type more often appears brown or white and has a visibly fibrous texture. If a vein is visible, avoid disturbing it unless you follow procedures to minimize releasing asbestos fibers into the air or breathing them.

We take care to check our products before they are released for sale, but the random nature of the natural occurrence of asbestos in minerals makes it impossible to assure contaminated slab free of such elements.

If you encounter a vein that appears fibrous, contact your representative for instructions on how to handle the product and to arrange its return. Do not cut or otherwise disturb the fibrous material.

Also, please follow these steps when handling, fabricating and installing soapstone or any other natural stone:

- Always inspect the soapstone slab to identify and locate veins prior to cutting and sanding.
- Always cut and process material in well ventilated locations to reduce the risk of inhaling dust.
- Avoid cutting directly through the white or brown veins when possible.
- Always follow the safety requirements issued by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (29 C.F.R. § 1926.1101) and/or any other agency relating to soapstone in general.
- Handle the material with care and use the necessary safety precautions when handling such material as with any other building material.

Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at info@polycor.com.

| 418 692-4695 • POLYCOR.COM



POLYCOR