

12 October 2026

Dear Member,

Industry Support Requested – Reducing Silica Risk from Engineered Stone Products

Over recent months, the Construction Leadership Council (CLC), working with representatives from housebuilding, manufacturing, occupational health, the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and industry specialists, has undertaken a detailed review of the risks associated with engineered stone products and the increasing incidence of silicosis linked to exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS).

The findings reinforce a concern that many of us have been following closely: exposure to silica dust remains one of the most significant occupational health risks within the construction and manufacturing sectors. Evidence emerging both in the UK and internationally demonstrates that workers involved in the fabrication and installation of high-silica engineered stone products can develop serious and, in some cases, accelerated forms of silicosis after relatively short exposure periods.

The CLC Working Group has therefore proposed a package of measures aimed at significantly reducing risk across the supply chain. A key recommendation is for industry to move away from engineered stone products containing 40% or greater crystalline silica content and progressively transition towards lower silica alternatives, supported by improved product information, robust fabrication standards and enhanced occupational hygiene controls.

HBF Health & Safety Committee Engagement

This issue has already been considered by the HBF Health & Safety Committee, which has been actively reviewing the occupational health risks associated with engineered stone and respirable crystalline silica exposure. The Committee recognises the serious and potentially life-changing consequences of uncontrolled exposure and supports industry efforts to reduce risk through improved product selection, enhanced fabrication standards, effective control measures and better occupational health management. The Committee has encouraged wider engagement with HBF members to understand implementation challenges and to help shape a practical industry-led response.

Industry Collaboration

This work represents a genuine collaboration across the construction, manufacturing, occupational health and regulatory communities. The recommendations have been developed through the Construction Leadership Council Working Group, bringing together major housebuilders, manufacturers, fabricators, occupational hygiene specialists and the Health and Safety Executive to identify practical, evidence-based measures that can reduce the risk of silicosis whilst maintaining a workable and resilient supply chain.

The Home Builders Federation has played an important role in these discussions through its engagement with the CLC, the HBF Health & Safety Committee and wider industry stakeholders. The contribution of HBF members has helped ensure that the recommendations reflect the realities of the homebuilding sector while maintaining a clear focus on protecting the health of those involved in the manufacture, fabrication and installation of these products.

This is not an initiative being driven by any single organisation or sector. Rather, it is an opportunity for the entire industry to work together to address a significant occupational health risk, share good practice and demonstrate collective leadership in protecting current and future generations of workers.

HBF recognises that member businesses are at different stages of this journey and that practical implementation will require engagement with manufacturers, suppliers, designers, procurement teams and installation contractors. However, the health risks associated with silica exposure are well established, and we believe the industry has an opportunity to demonstrate proactive leadership in protecting workers and preventing future occupational disease.

Accordingly, I would be grateful for your support in the following areas:

- Reviewing your current specification and procurement practices for engineered stone products.
- Engaging with suppliers regarding the crystalline silica content of products being offered.
- Considering a transition away from engineered stone products containing 40% or greater crystalline silica content and towards lower silica alternatives where commercially and technically practical.
- Supporting the use of fabricators who can demonstrate robust occupational health controls, including those operating to recognised industry standards such as the WFF/BOHS Quality Mark programme.
- Sharing any comments, concerns, technical feedback or implementation challenges with HBF so that we can ensure the industry's voice is fully represented in ongoing discussions.

This is fundamentally about preventing life-changing occupational illness. While views may differ on the long-term regulatory approach, there should be no debate about our collective responsibility to reduce avoidable exposure to silica dust and to promote the highest standards of occupational health throughout our supply chains.

The industry has a genuine opportunity to demonstrate leadership ahead of potential future regulatory change by taking sensible, proportionate steps now to reduce workers' exposure to silica-generating materials and processes. Learning from the evidence emerging both in the UK and internationally, we should collectively strive to ensure that no worker develops a preventable occupational disease as a result of simply carrying out their job.

As an industry, we have successfully collaborated on major safety initiatives in the past, and this presents another opportunity to work collectively to improve occupational health outcomes. By engaging now, we can help shape a practical and proportionate approach that protects workers, supports innovation within the supply chain and demonstrates the homebuilding sector's commitment to responsible leadership.

I would encourage all members to review the attached CLC recommendations and provide feedback to us at HBF via our Health & Safety Committee Meetings which takes place 4 times yearly. Your input will help inform our future engagement with the CLC, HSE and wider industry stakeholders.

We would welcome your experiences, comments, observations and examples of current good practice, or any potential challenges associated with implementation.

Thank you in advance for your support and engagement on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,



Neil Jefferson
Chief Executive