

Topic title: Respirable Crystalline Silica

Brief description and main aims:

In 2016 the European Commission started a revision of the “Carcinogens” Directive (2004/37/EC) which led (at the end of the legislative procedure) to the inclusion within the scope of this Directive of various substances, including “Respirable Crystalline Silica” (RCS).

By doing so the EU legislator recognises RCS as being a carcinogenic substance and introduced a binding OEL (occupational exposure level) of 0,1 mg/m³, which now becomes mandatory in all the Member States.

Why FIEC is dealing with this issue/topic and their objective(s):

Crystalline silica is an essential material, with the substance having an abundance of uses in industry and being a vital component in many things used in our everyday lives. It is impossible to imagine houses without bricks, mortar or windows, cars without engines or windscreens, or life without everyday items made of glass or pottery. It is therefore present in most of construction-related activities.

For many years, it has been known that the inhalation of fine dust containing a proportion of crystalline silica can cause lung damage (silicosis).

The EU sectoral social partners for the construction industry FIEC, representing the employers, and EFBWW (European Federation of Building and Wood Workers), representing the workers, are preparing a future joint project aiming at identifying best practice examples and elaborating guidelines for helping companies in complying with the requirements of the modified “Carcinogens” Directive.

Actions and key dates :

12/12/2017 – Adoption of the amended “Carcinogens” Directive (2017/2398/EC)

14/3/2018 – First meeting of a joint FIEC-EFBWW working group

Spring 2019 – Submission of a FIEC-EFBWW social dialogue project