

California Proposes Emergency Regulation to Protect Workers From Silicosis

California approves an emergency temporary standard to safeguard workers from silicosis after finding unsafe work practices in the stone fabrication industry.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, January 4, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Workers who cut and grind artificial stone may breathe in silica particles, causing [silicosis](#), a disease that can lead to permanent lung damage, respiratory failure or even death. The California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board (Cal/OSHA) approved an emergency temporary standard to safeguard workers from silicosis after finding that unsafe work practices were widespread in the artificial stone fabrication industry.

Jeffrey Nadrich, lead partner of Nadrich & Cohen Accident Injury Lawyers, voiced his support for the new regulation. "Cal/OSHA's approval of this emergency standard is an important step to protect California's artificial stone fabrication workers. I hope that Cal/OSHA ultimately makes this temporary emergency standard a permanent one," Nadrich said.

Occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) is the main cause of silicosis. Anyone exposed to large amounts of RCS will eventually develop silicosis within a few years. When workers inhale RCS particles, the particles end up in their lungs, creating fibrotic areas that are incapable of oxygen exchange. Scarring continues inside the lungs even after exposure to RCS ceases.

Artificial stone workers are most at risk for the disease, as while granite is composed of only 10 to 45 percent crystalline silica and marble is composed of little to no silica, artificial stone is composed of more than 93 percent crystalline silica.

Cal/OSHA estimated that there are about 4,040 stone fabrication workers in the state, and that about 500 to 850 of these workers will probably develop silicosis, with about 90 to 160 of those workers probably dying from it.

Cal/OSHA expects the emergency regulation to substantially reduce the rates of silicosis and associated deaths in California. The new regulation requires employers to monitor tasks with high silica exposure, update signage to warn workers of the dangers of exposure, provide proper respiratory protection to at-risk employees and more.

Other serious diseases that can be caused by silica exposure include: lung cancer, kidney disease, autoimmune disease and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

The law firm of Nadrich & Cohen Accident Injury Lawyers is currently investigating claims on behalf of artificial stone fabrication workers in California who have been diagnosed with silicosis.

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