



MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

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Our Reference:
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POTENTIAL HAZARD – RESPIRABLE DUST ON EQUIPMENT RETURNED FROM THEATRE

Some equipment being returned from theatre to UK for servicing and maintenance is contaminated with dust potentially containing respirable crystalline silica. Maintenance, servicing and refurbishment activities that disturb this dust carry with them the potential to expose those undertaking the task to airborne dust containing respirable crystalline silica.

IPTs should provide organisations that undertake maintenance, servicing or refurbishment work on equipment returned from theatre, with information on the potential contamination with dust. This will inform the organisations' risk assessment process and the selection of control measures that reduce exposure to as low as is reasonably practicable.

The attached template provides text for IPTs to include in correspondence with the organisations they use. Please ensure that IPTs communicate this information.

{signed on DII}

G M JONES
Director
Safety & Environmental Protection

Encl. Template letter

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POTENTIAL HAZARD – RESPIRABLE DUST ON EQUIPMENT RETURNED FROM THEATRE

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You will be aware that exposure to hazardous substances must be adequately controlled and, for substances assigned a WEL, exposure does not exceed the WEL. Respirable crystalline silica has been assigned an 8 Hr Time Weighted Average (TWA) Workplace Exposure Limit (WEL) of 0.1 mg/M³.

Processes that actively generate airborne dust, such as use of compressed air lines, should be avoided. Cleaning techniques that minimise generation of airborne dust include wet or vacuum cleaning. If this is not reasonably practicable or does not reduce exposure sufficiently then use of enclosures and/or properly designed exhaust ventilation systems – supplemented by respiratory protective equipment – may be necessary. The provision of respiratory protective equipment on its own as a control measure is unlikely to be acceptable.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recommends that risk assessments for silica follow the “special” control approach as laid out in their guidance sheet G400, further information on dealing with respirable silica can be obtained from the HSE and from the British Occupational Hygiene Society (BOHS).