



Gypsum Products Development Association

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## Gypsum Dust

Gypsum is a safe product to work and live with. It has been in use for over 3000 years and is one of the most well documented and tested of all building materials.

Dust from sawing or sanding can irritate the respiratory system, skin and eyes. When working with plaster or plasterboard, avoid breathing dust.

Crystalline Silica is present in many construction products, such as sandstone, concrete and sand and, in much smaller quantities, occurs naturally in gypsum. When gypsum products are mechanically altered – sawn, drilled or sanded – it can create particles of Crystalline Silica, the smallest of which are termed Respirable Crystalline Silica. If the dust becomes airborne, the tiniest of these RCS particles can be small enough to reach deeply into the lungs and can cause harmful health effects.

It is important to remember:-

- Where practicable use engineering methods to control dust levels and tools with dust extraction – choice of work method e.g. vacuum cleaning vs. brushes; use of LEV to protect users from dusty processes.
- Use in a well ventilated area – **allowing air to move between the indoors and outdoors**. This can be done with windows, vents, or fans.
- If the exposure standards could be exceeded, the final user should determine the reasonably practicable controls required to prevent or adequately control exposure to dusts during their process as part of their risk assessment, including the type of mask and the filter category required. – ensure that risk reduction hierarchy is applied (eliminate/substitute/control) and only use PPE as last resort; <https://multimedia.3m.com/mws/media/7384880/filters-for-reusable-respirators-selector.pdf>
- In addition, face masks must be face-fitted to the user – <https://www.hse.gov.uk/respiratory-protective-equipment/fit-testing-basics.htm>

## GPDA

The role of the Gypsum Products Development Association (GPDA) is to develop and encourage the understanding of gypsum based building materials and systems. The Association provides a cohesive package of advice and information on all developments affecting the gypsum industry, and communicates it to all aspects of the construction industry. Issues include the latest technical and product developments as well as training opportunities in the industry.

Please check that you have the latest versions of our guidance notes by visiting [www.gpda.com](http://www.gpda.com) or email us on [admin@gpda.com](mailto:admin@gpda.com)