

Kitchen Benchtops Killing Tradies

- 
- New CoR Laws 1st October
 - Manufacturers cannot void your warranty
 - October is Safety Month

October 2018 News

Welcome to the October Safety Action News

October is Safety Month in Australia. This year's theme, 'a moment is all it takes' reminds us to reduce harm every day. New Chain of Responsibility laws for heavy vehicles start this month, see details on page 5.

Gary Rowe explains the dangers of artificial stone benchtops and we answer a common concern that installing after-market safety features will void a product's warranty.

Katie Weber goes on maternity leave later this month – we wish her the best for the arrival of her third child and we will update you in the next edition.

Stay safe!



Gary Rowe heading off to another safety workshop

Safety Action Team



Stephen



Katie



Andrea



Gary



Zara



Ben



Kirill

Upcoming Training and Events

2-day Safety Leadership Course – Tuesday 13th & Wednesday 14th November 2018

[Click here for more information or to book.](#)

Strategic Planning Workshop – Tuesday 18th December 2018

Prepare your safety plans for next year. [Click here for more information or to book.](#)

Safety Action (FREE) Christmas Breakfast – “Planning for 2019”

Tuesday 4th December 2018. [Click here to reserve your place.](#)

Kitchen Benchtops Killing Tradies by Gary Rowe

Artificial stone benchtops have become increasingly popular over the last 20 years for new and renovated kitchens and bathrooms in Australia.

Artificial stone, sometimes called engineered quartz, is made in factories either in blocks or slabs. They are then cut and polished by fabricators with final trimming and assembly on site.

How Engineered Quartz Benchtops are Made?

These benchtops are typically manufactured by crushing quartz rock which is then mixed with desired additives such as glass (or diamonds if you are filthy rich) and hardened under high pressure and heat with a resin adhesive.



A modern kitchen and bathroom with artificial stone benchtops

Engineered quartz benchtops are great products that look and feel just like real granite or stone. Both artificial and real quartz stone benchtops are solid and inert for normal usage.

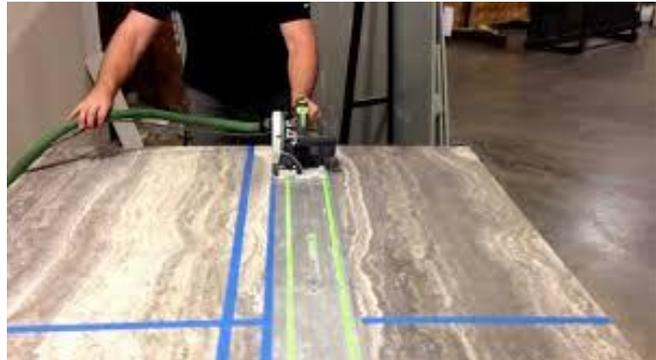
So, what is the problem?

In our June newsletter we introduced the topic of **dust hazards** and explained the difference between respirable and inhalable dust. Fine quartz dust is respirable and reaches deep into the lungs and can cause serious disease such as silicosis.

Risk arises when the artificial or real stone benchtops are cut or polished which releases large quantities of fine quartz (silica) respirable dust into the air and breathing zone of tradies fitting the new benchtops.



A sample warning sign which might or might not be displayed



Cutting artificial stone benchtops Note: cutter on right has a dust extraction tube to minimise airborne silica dust in work area

Breathing Silica Dust is Dangerous

If inadequate dust suppression is provided and workers are not protected with appropriate respirators, then repeated or significant exposure to silica dust can give rise to respiratory or lung disease.

Who is at Risk?

People most at risk are middle-aged tradies who have been involved with numerous kitchen and bathroom renovations using man-made stone.

The reason for the rise in silicosis cases appears to be we are all so used to doing jobs around the home with no major risks or precautions that workers don't realise the serious health risk posed by these relatively new type of benchtops.

A Paper Respirator is Not Enough

It is not enough to simply wear a cheap paper respirator when cutting quartz stone and engineered stone benchtops, effective ventilation and water to suppress the dust helps ensure the health of workers and other people in the area.

For a copy of our dust risk assessment checklist call Zara or Gary on 03 8544 4300 or email enquiries@safetyaction.com.au

If you are interested in Respirator Fit testing call Stephen 03 8544 4300.



A person suffering silicosis on oxygen treatment

Electrical Plumbing Risks

Last month we reported on the potential electrical risks associated with cutting water pipes without appropriate precautions.

One of our readers, and good friend Kym from South Australia, has written to remind us of a serious example of this risk that occurred in WA only a few months ago.

An 11-year old girl, Denishar Woods, received an electric shock when she touched a garden tap at her home in the Perth suburb of Beldon in March of this year.



Garden tap and injured girl

Denishar suffered severe brain damage and loss of sight. A tragic incident.

The home is a WA government public housing property, and clearly they are now looking more closely at these type of risks and control measures to prevent this happening again.

For information on this tragic accident [click here](#) for the ABC News coverage.

Can Manufacturers Void Your Warranty?

We often hear something like "the manufacturer said if I install an after-market attachment it will void my warranty".

Is this true? The answer is no!

Under Australian Consumer Law most purchases under \$40,000 have a mandatory consumer guarantee. Manufacturer warranties are separate to the consumer guarantee which manufacturers cannot cancel.

Manufacturers cannot cancel your consumer guarantee.

Consumer Guarantee

The consumer guarantee provides a set of requirements including the product is:

- Of acceptable quality;
- Safe;
- Durable and lasting (unless a consumable item);
- Free of defects for a reasonable period of time (depending upon the item); and
- Does all the things normally expected of the product.

Defects will entitle the consumer to repair, replacement or refund.

Manufacturer's Warranty

Returning to the manufacturer's warranty, even if you fit an after-market attachment the manufacturer would still have honour all parts of their warranty not affected by the after-market attachment.

Let's consider a case where a farmer installs an after-market roll-over protection (ROP) device on a quadbike. The manufacturer cannot void the entire warranty but would still have to support all defects or faults not affected by the roll-over device.

Only Voids Warranty if Negative Consequences of Attachment

For example, the engine, lights, controls and steering are unlikely to be affected by a roll-over device. However, if the attachment causes the vehicle to be over-loaded or higher centre of gravity (unstable) the manufacturer could reasonably avoid liability for things it affects, such as excessive wear on tyres or suspension, or body damage if the higher vehicle tips over.



Quad Bike with ROP
Photo ref. maranoaplusmore.com.au/

Safety Checks on Hoist, Cranes and Winches

A recent incident that to the death of a worker in Box Hill, Victoria when a kibble containing concrete fell from the tower crane and struck workers.

Crane operators and owners are reminded to ensure that cranes, hoists and winches are inspected and maintained to minimise risk.

WorkSafe Victoria Crackdown on Dangerous Goods Storage

Following the recent factory fire in Melbourne's inner west, Inspectors from Worksafe, EPA and MFB will be conducting over 500 Dangerous Goods (DG) inspections in workplaces across Victoria. Businesses that are not compliant will receive enforcement notices.

See WorkSafe Victoria www.worksafe.vic.gov.au or call Safety Action for more information on DG compliance.



The theme for this October's National Safe Work Month is "A moment is all it takes." A moment's forethought can prevent harm. This year commit to taking a safety moment every day in your workplace. More info and resources [here](#).

New CoR Laws & Higher Penalties commence 1st October

New Chain of Responsibility (CoR) laws for heavy vehicles start on 1st October. The new laws require all parties in the CoR to ensure safe practices over transport tasks they control or influence. Penalties have increased for companies and individuals.

Legal Requirements Extended- Existing CoR law included fatigue, mass, dimension, loading and speed. The new laws also include vehicle standards and maintenance.

Watch the recent webinar where Ben Olih explains the changes - [click here](#). See details below for the next CoR webinar.

For a quote to conduct; an independent CoR review, executive briefing or CoR training session call us on 03 8544 4300 or email enquiries@safetyaction.com.au

Safety Action Webinars 2018

Chain of Responsibility (CoR) Webinars

2 OCT / 2.00 PM [CoR Operator Duties e.g. loading & restraint](#)

Chemicals Webinars

3 OCT / 10.00 AM [Chemicals – Part 5: DG Assessments](#)

9 OCT / 2.00 PM [Chemicals – Part 6: Maintaining a Chemical Register & Data Sheets](#)

25 OCT / 11.00 AM [Chemicals – Part 7: Labelling Pipelines & Vessels](#)

9 NOV / 1.00 PM [Chemicals – Part 8: Preparing a DG Manifest](#)

20 NOV / 10.00 AM [Chemicals – Part 9: Emergency Preparedness](#)

Machinery Safety Webinars

16 OCT / 10.00 AM [Machinery Safety – Part 4: Machine Isolation](#)

15 NOV / 10.00 AM [Machinery Safety – Part 5: Machinery Maturity Model](#)

27 NOV / 10.00 AM [Machinery Safety – Part 6: Machinery Solutions](#)