

What Can Designers do to Minimise Dust Created by Cutting Cement Based Products?

The Problem

Cutting and preparing masonry and cement based products especially with power tools creates silica dust which affects operatives, fellow workers and the public. Exposure to this dust increases the risk of developing serious lung diseases such as cancer, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disorder and silicosis.



A Design Solution

Talk to the contractor early in the process to try to avoid or reduce the need to cut, grind or smooth where possible. These discussions may lead to specifying a different size, thickness or type of product. They may also lead to an increased focus on the layout of the product on the drawing to avoid excessive or awkward cuts.



The contractor should be alerted to the need to control significant dust risks where these remain such as with wet methods or vacuum attachments to power tools. These are often available....but don't always get provided.



Benefits

- Safeguards the health of workers.
- Cutting and grinding operations are slow and add to the cost of the activity.
- Where inadequate controls are used the clean up time can also be considerable and costly. This is particularly the case where work is undertaken indoors or in an 'occupied' environment.

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