

DO'S and DON'TS for installing stone worktops

This document provides practical guidance for installers, their managers and supervisors who are involved in the installation of stone worktops (whether made of natural, artificial or engineered stone).



- **DO** ensure you and fellow installers are trained to work with stone and know how to report any issues occurring on-site.
- **DO** regularly check and maintain any equipment (tools or controls) that may be needed on-site. Ensure filters in on-tool extraction, vacuums and RPE are changed as necessary.

Competent staff and effective processes



- **DON'T** use untrained installers – handling and fitting stone worktops, even without on-site fabrication, can put your health at risk.
- **DON'T** provide or use inadequate, or poorly maintained, tools or controls.



- **DO** check the specification before starting installation and ensure that any optional aspects e.g. cutting drainage grooves are resolved.
- **DO** eliminate on-site fabrication as much as possible e.g. cut out sink & tap holes in the workshop. Clean dust off worktops before transport to site e.g. by wet cleaning or the use of class M vacuum.
- **DO** use accurate measurements for fabrication e.g. get specifications from contractors/customers or use templates or infrared measuring devices.
- **DO** identify any fabrication tasks that must be done on-site, and any controls required. Develop a safe system of work and ensure all facilities e.g. adequate water supply for suppression, segregated area etc are available.

Pre-installation



- **DON'T** be persuaded to carry out additional fabrication tasks on-site that have not been covered within the specification.
- **DON'T** do fabrication tasks on-site that could be done in the workshop. Thin overlays and upstands may need to be cut on site if they would be too fragile for transport.
- **DON'T** rely on poor measurements or estimates that make it more likely that fabrication of finishing may need to be undertaken on-site.
- **DON'T** assume any combination of controls will work - check you know the right combination and how to correctly use each.



- **DO** any minor on-site modifications in a well-ventilated, segregated area with restricted access, (ideally outdoors) using appropriate controls.
- **DO** use appropriate controls:
 - apply on-tool controls like water suppression or on-tool extraction (with shroud and dust collector attached to class M vacuum).
 - also use RPE with APF of at least 20 to protect against mist/dust unless monitoring data shows this level of protection is unnecessary for adequate control.
- **DO** shut down any local heating systems with blowers or air-conditioning units that could resuspend settled dust and increase airborne concentrations.

On-site installation



- **DON'T** carry out major modifications on-site. Take your worktop back to the workshop.
- **DON'T** rely on RPE alone unless your risk assessment shows it is adequate.
- **DON'T** assume all air movement is good ventilation – check that any airborne dust is being carried away from workers.



- **DO** clean up after installation - use wet methods (e.g. low pressure wet hosing) or vacuum (dust class M) and RPE.
- **DO** discard all stone waste materials (wet slurry & captured dust) promptly in a safe manner.
- **DO** avoid transferring dust between areas by keeping PPE clean e.g. Use a vacuum to clean coveralls when leaving a dusty area.

Post-installation



- **DON'T** use any cleaning method that creates airborne dust e.g. dry sweeping or compressed air.
- **DON'T** delay cleaning up – wet slurries can dry out, and dust become airborne.
- **DON'T** use dry brushing or compressed air to clean dust off work clothing.

For further information on working with silica visit:

www.hse.gov.uk/stonemasonry/installing-stone-worktops.htm