

NT EPA Position Statement:

Disposal requirements for Engineered Stone in the Northern Territory

Purpose

This position statement outlines the Northern Territory Environment Protection Authority's (NT EPA) expectations for the disposal of engineered stone in the Northern Territory.

Regulatory Context

A national ban on the use of engineered stone benchtops, panels and slabs came into effect on 1 July 2024 to protect Australian workers from the potentially fatal effects of respirable crystalline silica dust.

The ban was the result of a recommendation by Safe Work Australia following expert advice about the rise of silicosis in workers exposed to engineered stone. Further information can be found on the WorkSafe NT website: [Crystalline silica and silicosis | NT WorkSafe](#)

In December 2024, the Asbestos and Silica Safety and Eradication Agency (ASSEA) finalised the [Silica National Strategic Plan 2024-2030 \(SNSP\)](#). The SNSP was developed through extensive consultation with experts, industry, unions, and advocacy groups and was formally endorsed by all State, Territory, and the Commonwealth Governments. The SNSP outlines a cohesive, nationwide approach to preventing workplace exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) and addressing the re-emergence of silicosis and other silica-related disease. As a result, it is expected that an increasing volume of products containing respirable silica, including engineered stone, will require disposal in the NT.

The NT EPA regulates activities associated with the handling, transport, storage and disposal (including landfill operations) of listed wastes under the [Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998](#) (the Act).

Engineered stone, engineered stone products and silica dust are not considered to be listed wastes under the Act.

Environmental Risk

Finished engineered stone products are of negligible environmental risk when left undisturbed and are safe for everyday usage by the community.

Risk to the environment and human health primarily arises during the manufacturing and processing of engineered stone products, where airborne dust or slurries (containing crystalline silica) are generated and inhaled into the lungs.

To minimise risks from crystalline silica, care should be taken to minimise the amount of dust and respirable slurry generated when handling engineered stone products. Further information can be found on the WorkSafe NT website: [Crystalline silica and silicosis | NT WorkSafe](#)

NT EPA Position

In accordance with industry best practice methods and [NT Worksafe guidance](#), the NT EPA considers that engineered stone by-products (including dust and slurry) should be handled in accordance with methods prescribed for Asbestos Containing Material. This position does not

extend to the disposal of finished engineered stone products, provided they remain intact and will not be disturbed.

In particular crushing, grinding or any processing that generates silica dust should be avoided.

This conservative approach ensures that the potential for generation and exposure to toxic crystalline silica dust from the inappropriate handling of engineered stone is mitigated.

Disposal expectations

Everyone in the Northern Territory is required to comply with Section 12 of the [Waste Management and Pollution Control Act 1998](#), which describes General Environmental Duty (GED). To demonstrate compliance with the GED, among other things, a person must take all measures that are reasonable and practicable to prevent or minimise pollution or environmental harm.

This may include following industry best practice or the most current scientific advice, including but not limited to, disposal of engineered stone by-products (including dust and slurry) at a licensed landfill.

A register of licensed landfills across the NT is available on the NT EPA public register: [Environment protection licences | NTEPA](#)

Contact your local landfill operator for further information on the requirements for disposing of engineered stone products.

Further Information

For further information on the requirements for managing or disposing of wastes in the Northern Territory, or to seek advice on specific circumstances, please contact the Environmental Regulation Division at environmentalregulation@nt.gov.au.