

Soapstone Safety Data Sheet

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1. Identification

Product name: Soapstone stone

Common uses: Countertops, sinks, flooring, wall cladding, architectural dimension stone, decorative stone, and related fabricated products.

Recommended restrictions: Avoid dry cutting, grinding, sanding, drilling, crushing, or polishing where dust may be generated without appropriate controls.

Manufacturer/supplier: To be completed by supplier.

Emergency phone: To be completed by supplier.

2. Hazard Identification

Finished soapstone is not expected to present an inhalation hazard during normal handling and use as an installed or intact product.

Dust may be generated during cutting, grinding, drilling, polishing, crushing, demolition, or similar operations. The Natural Stone Institute identifies silicosis as an occupational hazard associated with exposure to respirable silica dust and states that prevention requires avoiding exposure to respirable silica dust.

Potential hazards from dust-generating operations:

- Respiratory irritation from airborne dust.
- Eye, skin, nose, and throat irritation from dust.
- Potential respirable crystalline silica exposure depending on the stone source and operation.
- Silicosis risk from uncontrolled respirable silica dust exposure.

NSI notes that silicosis is an occupational hazard and is not a danger to homeowners or other end users from finished stone.

3. Composition / Information on Ingredients

Material: Natural soapstone dimension stone.

Composition: Natural stone composition varies by quarry, color, texture, and geological source. NSI's Dimension Stone Design Manual resource library includes soapstone technical information and product descriptions. Dust generated from processing natural stone may include respirable crystalline silica depending on the specific stone and process.

No product-specific ingredient percentages are provided in this general document.

4. First-Aid Measures

Inhalation: Move the affected person to fresh air. If coughing, breathing difficulty, or irritation persists, seek medical attention.

Eye contact: Rinse cautiously with clean water. Remove contact lenses if present and easy to do. Continue rinsing. Seek medical attention if irritation persists.

Skin contact: Wash exposed skin with soap and water. Seek medical attention if irritation persists.

Ingestion: Not an expected route of exposure for intact soapstone. Rinse mouth if dust is swallowed. Seek medical attention if discomfort occurs.

Most important symptoms/effects: Dust may cause temporary mechanical irritation. Chronic uncontrolled exposure to respirable silica dust may cause serious lung disease, including silicosis.

5. Fire-Fighting Measures

Suitable extinguishing media: Use extinguishing media appropriate for surrounding fire.

Specific hazards: Soapstone is not expected to burn. Dust from stone is not expected to be combustible.

Protective equipment: Firefighters should use protective equipment appropriate for the surrounding fire conditions.

6. Accidental Release Measures

For intact slabs, tiles, or pieces: Use safe handling methods to prevent breakage, falling, pinching, and crushing injuries.

For dust or debris:

- Avoid creating airborne dust.
- Use wet methods or dust collection where practical.
- Do not dry sweep dust if it can be avoided.
- Clean using methods that reduce airborne dust exposure.
- Wear appropriate PPE based on exposure conditions.

7. Handling and Storage

Handling:

- Handle slabs and stone pieces using appropriate lifting, securing, and slab-handling procedures.
- Avoid breathing dust from cutting, grinding, drilling, polishing, or demolition.
- Use wet cutting and other best practices that limit silica exposure whenever possible, consistent with NSI guidance.
- Provide employee training, air monitoring, engineering controls, housekeeping practices, PPE, and medical surveillance where required or appropriate.

Storage:

- Store slabs and stone securely to prevent tipping, sliding, or falling.
- Keep material stable and protected from impact.
- Maintain good housekeeping in fabrication and storage areas.

8. Exposure Controls / Personal Protection

Engineering controls:

- Use wet methods, local exhaust, dust collection, and other engineering controls to reduce airborne dust.
- Conduct breathing-zone sampling where exposure has not been evaluated, consistent with NSI silica guidance.
- Maintain housekeeping practices that minimize airborne dust.

Administrative controls:

- Train employees on silica and slab safety.
- Maintain exposure-control procedures for fabrication and field work.

- Use medical surveillance where required or appropriate for respirable crystalline silica exposure.

Personal protective equipment:

- Respiratory protection: Use appropriate respiratory protection when engineering and work-practice controls do not adequately control airborne dust.
- Eye protection: Safety glasses or goggles when dust, chips, or fragments may be generated.
- Hand protection: Work gloves suitable for stone handling.
- Foot protection: Safety footwear when handling slabs, tile, or heavy pieces.
- Body protection: Work clothing appropriate for fabrication, installation, and cleanup tasks.

9. Physical and Chemical Properties

Appearance: Natural stone; solid slabs, tile, blocks, or pieces; color and texture vary.

Odor: Odorless.

Physical state: Solid.

Flammability: Not expected to be flammable.

Solubility: Not expected to be soluble in water under normal conditions.

Other properties: Product-specific physical and mechanical properties vary by soapstone variety and should be verified for the specific stone.

10. Stability and Reactivity

Reactivity: Stable under normal conditions of handling, storage, and use.

Chemical stability: Stable as a finished stone product.

Possibility of hazardous reactions: Not expected under normal conditions.

Conditions to avoid: Dust generation without controls; unsafe slab handling; impact that may break stone.

Incompatible materials: Product-specific information not available in this general document.

Hazardous decomposition products: Not expected under normal conditions.

11. Toxicological Information

Likely routes of exposure: Inhalation of dust during fabrication, installation, demolition, or other dust-generating work; eye and skin contact with dust.

Finished soapstone: Not expected to present an inhalation hazard during ordinary installed use.

Dust exposure: NSI states there is no cure for silicosis and that prevention depends on avoiding exposure to respirable silica dust. NSI encourages employers to protect employees through training, air monitoring, engineering controls, housekeeping practices, PPE, and medical surveillance.

12. Ecological Information

No product-specific ecological data are provided in this general document. Soapstone is a natural mineral material. Prevent uncontrolled release of dust, slurry, or waste into waterways according to applicable site procedures and regulations.

13. Disposal Considerations

Dispose of stone waste, dust, slurry, and packaging according to applicable federal, state, local, and site requirements. Reuse or recycle stone where practical. Avoid disposal practices that generate uncontrolled airborne dust.

14. Transport Information

Soapstone is not expected to be regulated as a hazardous material for transport in intact slab, tile, block, or piece form. Secure loads to prevent shifting, falling, or breakage.

15. Regulatory Information

This general document does not determine product-specific regulatory classification. Employers and suppliers should evaluate actual workplace exposure, product composition, and applicable requirements for the specific jurisdiction and operation.

NSI notes that OSHA's silica rule reduced the permissible exposure level for crystalline silica and that the rule includes standards affecting both general industry/maritime and construction. NSI encourages stone companies to assess silica exposure risks, review exposure measurements, and conduct breathing-zone sampling where monitoring has not occurred.

16. Other Information

This document is intended for general communication about natural soapstone. It is not a substitute for a supplier-specific SDS, workplace exposure assessment, written silica exposure control plan, regulatory review, or medical advice.

References, Natural Stone Institute only:

- Natural Stone Institute, Silica Resources: <https://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/silica/>
- Natural Stone Institute, Safety Resources and Courses: <https://www.naturalstoneinstitute.org/programs/safety-resources/>
- Natural Stone Institute Publications, Dimension Stone Design Manual Resource Library, including Chapter 11 - Soapstone: <https://pubs.naturalstoneinstitute.org/resources/library/?mode=advancedSearch&method=get&submit=true&types=6>