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Statement on the Risk of Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica during Installation of Fire Doors containing Pyropanel FR Board Insulation

Pyropanel FR Board contains crystalline silica in the form of quartz particles. During handling of Pyropanel FR Boards, there is a potential for workers to be exposed to airborne dust containing respirable crystalline silica (RCS) particles, particularly when using power tools for cutting or routing of the FR Board. Long-term exposure to RCS at levels above the workplace exposure standard may increase the risk of developing lung diseases such as silicosis and lung cancer. SafeWork Australia has set a Workplace Exposure Standard for RCS of 0.05 mg/m³ as a time-weighted average concentration in the breathing zone over an 8-hour day/40-hour week to protect workers from developing these lung diseases.

Once the Pyropanel FR Boards are incorporated into the timber fire doors, the core panels are totally encapsulated and do not present a dust exposure hazard from handling the doors. During installation and fitment or replacement of door hardware as well as during maintenance, there may be a requirement for cutting, routing, chiselling and drilling holes into the fire doors. Some of these processes may impact on the internal fire rated core. As these tasks are generally short in duration and impact only a small amount of the internal core, the amount of dust that is released (a mixture of timber and FR Board dust) will be well below the workplace exposure standard on a time-weighted average basis and therefore present a low risk of RCS exposure.

Sensible precautions should, nonetheless be taken to reduce any potential timber and fire rated board dust exposures to as low as reasonably practicable. These precautions include the use of a properly fitting P2 respiratory protection when using power tools on fire doors as well as using a vacuum cleaner with an M or H Class HEPA filter with power tool vacuum attachments or for shadow vacuuming to capture any dust released and to clean up any debris on floors and other surfaces.

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