

Fiber Cement and OSHA Compliance

What is silica dust and OSHA Rule 29 CFR 1926.1153?

- Silica (SiO_2), intact, is perfectly safe and found in many building products, including fiber cement siding
- However, when cut or drilled, silica turns to crystalline silica which can be breathed in
- Crystalline silica exposure can cause **silicosis, lung cancer, chronic pulmonary diseases, and kidney failure**
- To protect workers, OSHA established and enforces a permissible exposure limit (PEL) for respirable silica. Any exposure above 0.100 mg/m^3 for 8 hours requires that the installer take additional protective measures



How do I cut fiber cement safely and under compliance?

- 2 of the 3 available options require measuring workers' exposure to silica, and limiting either the time of exposure or amount of dust - requiring a lot of time and resources to monitor and analyze
- The last option, the Specified Exposure Control Method, allows employers to use approved practices/equipment, listed in a table under the regulation. As long as these practices are followed, employers will be compliant
- For fiber cement, most of these guidelines require specialized saws that have a limited lifetime or a water feed, a HEPA vacuums/dust collection system, and/or required respiratory protection.

However, with the Snapper Shear*, dust is not an issue.

James Hardie® specifies that the best cutting method for fiber cement is either the snap and score method (safe, but time consuming), or using handheld shears, like the Snapper Shear by PacTool International.

Get rid of dust and be confident about your compliance – the Snapper Shear is the best solution for cutting fiber cement siding.



*Snapper Shear Patent US6250998B1

For more information, visit <https://www.osha.gov/silica/>