

THE NEPSI AGREEMENT GUIDE

ABOUT NEPSI

NEPSI – the European Network on Silica – was started in 2005 by social partners representing a diverse group of industries (European trade associations together with the IndustriAll European Trade Union) to address the concerns of occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS).

After a long negotiation of more than one year, the social partners signed an agreement which aims to protect the workers from exposure to respirable crystalline silica.

Through 19 trade associations, NEPSI represents over 2,000,000 people working in the silica-using industries.



WHAT IS THE NEPSI AGREEMENT?

As the first multi-sectorial social dialogue agreement signed in the presence of the European Commissioner, the NEPSI Agreement on Workers Health Protection through the Good Handling and Use of Crystalline Silica and Products Containing It has three main aims. These are:

- 1 To protect the health of employees and other individuals occupationally exposed at the workplace to RCS from materials/products/raw materials containing crystalline silica
- 2 To minimise exposure to respirable crystalline silica at the workplace by applying the Good Practices
- 3 To increase knowledge about the potential health effects of RCS and the NEPSI Good Practices to facilitate the protection of employee health and the health of other individuals exposed at the workplace to RCS

After successfully lowering levels of workplace exposure to RCS for more than 10 years, the NEPSI Agreement has been recognised as a true testament of EU-level social dialogue in action.

The Agreement encompasses procedures and guidance that are relevant across sectors to minimize exposure to RCS at the workplace by applying the good practices. The good practices prevent, eliminate or reduce occupational health risks related to RCS. The NEPSI guidance materials also aim to increase knowledge of potential health effects of respirable crystalline silica.

At the cornerstone of the Agreement is a risk assessment procedure to identify potential exposure to RCS at the workplace. The procedure must be performed regularly to determine which measures, or good practices to apply if needed, and to ensure continuous improvement.

Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs Mrs Marianne Thyssen highlighted on the tenth anniversary of the Agreement: the NEPSI Agreement

“deserves praise for leading to lower levels of exposure through spreading Good Practices which employers have actively bought into. And it has helped to increase the knowledge of the health effects of RCS. Crucially, it has and still is complementing European legislation in the field of worker protection. Setting limit values through EU legislation is instrumental for protection of workers' health. But it is the quality of implementation and enforcement on the ground [...] that will determine whether lives are saved. That is where we see the true value of the bottom-up approach, which has driven the success of NEPSI.”



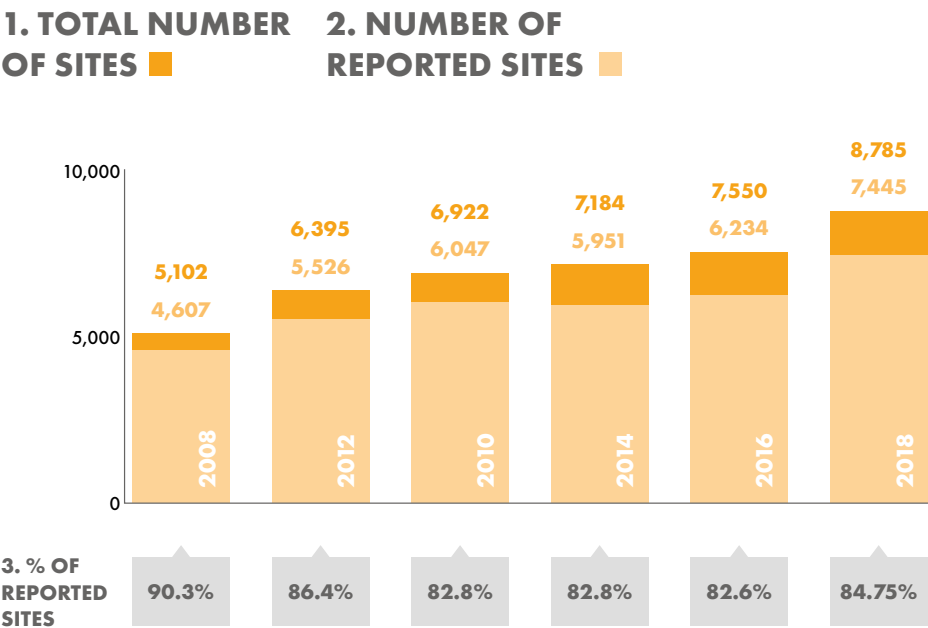


THE NEPSI KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

All signatories of the NEPSI Agreement — the extractive, glass, ceramics, foundry industries and the construction materials, including cement, mortar and concrete producers — commit to reporting on the NEPSI Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) every two years. The exercise aims to collect data linked to workers' exposure to RCS. The results play a key role in indicating the status of workers' health protection in terms of exposure risk management, health surveillance, training of employees and good on-site practices.

There are several KPIs and associated statistics that help monitor performance linked to the indicators. The infographics below show the progress between 2008–2018.

- 1. **Number of Sites** is the total number of individual worksites covered by the NEPSI signatory associations.
- 2. **Number of Reported Sites** is the number of individual NEPSI association-member worksites that have submitted a KPI report.
- 3. **% of Reported Sites** shows the number of sites that have submitted a KPI report, as a percentage of the total number of worksites.



3. % OF REPORTED SITES

90.3%

86.4%

82.8%

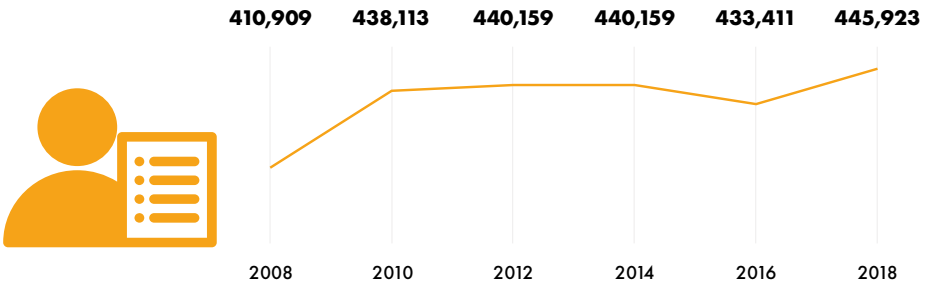
82.8%

82.6%

84.75%

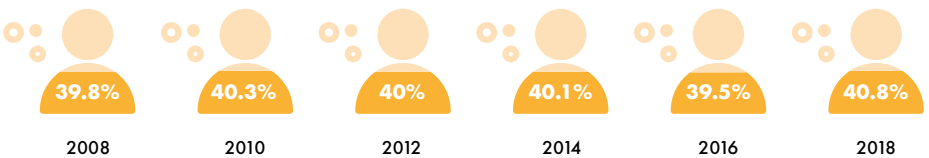
4. Number of Reported Employees is the total number of individual workers at worksites which have submitted a KPI report.

4. NUMBER OF REPORTED EMPLOYEES



5. % of Employees Potentially Exposed to RCS shows the percentage of individual workers that are potentially exposed to Respirable Crystalline Silica at their worksite, relative to the total number of workers. This reflects the fact that some workers may not be directly exposed to RCS in their role.

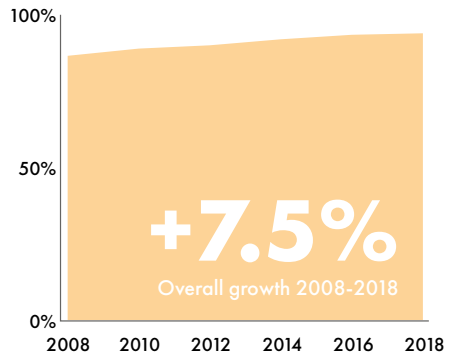
5. EMPLOYEES POTENTIALLY EXPOSED TO RCS IN THEIR ROLE ■



6. % Covered by Risk Assessment

shows the percentage of workers potentially exposed to RCS covered by an occupational risk assessment at their site.

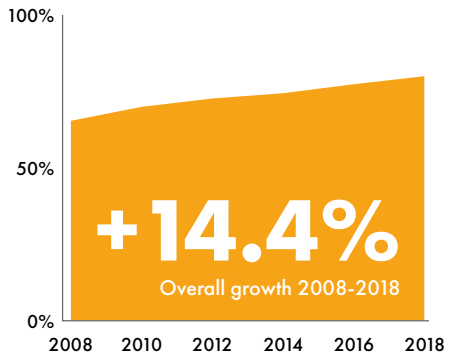
6. EMPLOYEES COVERED BY RISK ASSESSMENT



7. % Covered by Exposure Monitoring

shows the percentage of workers potentially exposed to RCS that work at a site that conducts RCS exposure monitoring.

7. EMPLOYEES COVERED BY EXPOSURE MONITORING



8. % Covered by Generic Health Surveillance

shows the percentage of workers potentially exposed to RCS who have access to health surveillance of some sort (not specifically for silicosis).

9. % Requiring Health Surveillance for Silicosis

shows the number of workers potentially exposed to RCS who are involved in higher-risk occupations and who are therefore required to operate under special health surveillance for silicosis. These workers have access to regular health check-ups.

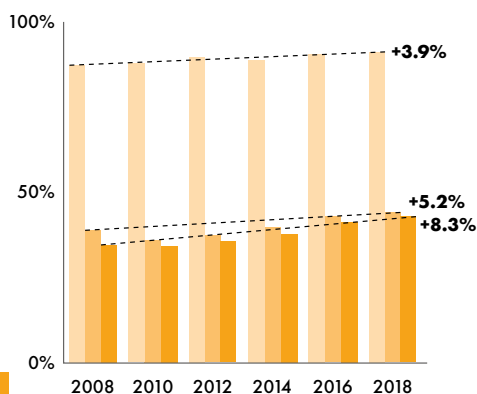
10. % Covered by Health Surveillance Protocol for Silicosis

shows the percentage of all RCS-exposed workers covered by a surveillance protocol for silicosis (including those required to operate under special surveillance, and others covered voluntarily).

8. EMPLOYEES COVERED BY GENERIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

9. EMPLOYEES REQUIRING HEALTH SURVEILLANCE FOR SILICOSIS

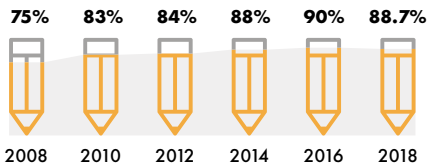
10. EMPLOYEES COVERED BY HEALTH SURVEILLANCE PROTOCOL FOR SILICOSIS



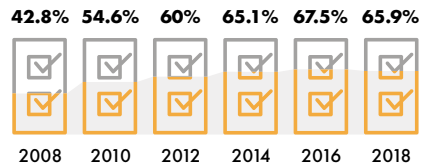
11. % Covered by General Training shows the percentage of workers potentially exposed to RCS who have undergone training on the general principles of prevention (ie. the hierarchy of risk controls).

12. % Covered Training on Task Sheets shows the percentage of workers potentially exposed who have undergone training based specifically on the NEPSI Task Sheets, which give specific guidance aimed at preventing / reducing exposure to RCS when conducting industrial tasks.

**11. EMPLOYEES
GIVEN GENERAL
TRAINING ON RCS ■**



**12. EMPLOYEES GIVEN
SPECIFIC TRAINING ON
NEPSI TASK SHEETS ■**

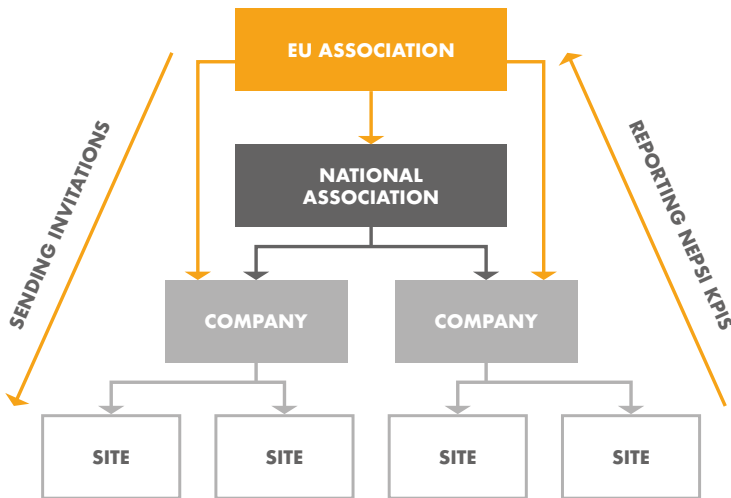


Each of the indicators show how the protection of employees in the workplace is constantly improving as a result of the implementation of the NEPSI Good Practices, even as the workforce continues to grow.

Since the agreement was signed in 2006, the bi-annual reports show consistent improvements in health & safety standards based on the KPIs. The success of the Agreement shows that NEPSI incentivizes the signatories to consistently improve.

The reporting process allows the NEPSI Council (made up of representatives of each signatory association) to draw up a summary report for all involved, including for authorities responsible for health and safety, on the application of the Agreement.

The illustration below shows obligations of each player in each of the levels of the reporting structure (sending invitations or reporting NEPSI KPIs).



Participation in the reporting process demonstrates a company's commitment to continuously reduce exposure to RCS. Once a company sends their bi-annual report, they receive a certificate from NEPSI proving the completion of NEPSI KPIs Reporting for that period.

The monitoring, reporting and improvement of the KPIs are essential to the integrity of the NEPSI Agreement.

WHY IS NEPSI IMPORTANT?

The NEPSI agreement helps fulfil the legal and moral obligations to protect workers from workplace hazards — specifically exposure to RCS.

FOR WORKER AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

NEPSI ensures that all parties have the tools needed to protect workers' health by doing the right things to minimise exposure to RCS. The NEPSI measures are extremely effective in protecting workers in the workplace from lung diseases including silicosis, which is an incurable occupational disease resulting from long-term exposure to high levels of RCS.

FOR COMPANIES

The NEPSI Agreement is essential to the protection and improved health of workers in industries where there may be occupational exposure to RCS. The Good Practices give practical guidance to companies and their workers, and the collation of regular reporting data helps companies identify areas where protective measures can be enhanced. The gathering of data also helps to provide an accurate record of RCS exposure monitoring across industries, assisting the European Commission in future policy decisions related to RCS.

FOR ASSOCIATIONS

By becoming a signatory of the NEPSI Agreement, associations are able to show a serious commitment to the well-being of their industry workforce and implement proven protection measures. Signatory associations also have an opportunity to engage and learn from NEPSI partners, and encourage the wider adoption of good practices.

Overall, participation both improves the working conditions of employees and makes businesses more competitive, which is in the interest of all involved.

“ The measures developed by NEPSI are an asset to the industry, which protect our workers making the work we do safer and more profitable in the long-term. ”

Klaus Krause
Energy & EHS Manager, Rosenthal GmbH



“ Thanks to the NEPSI Good Practices, our workforce is better informed and equipped to protect themselves against respirable crystalline silica dust, which is one of our highest priorities. ”

Dr. Paul Páez-Maletz
Managing Director, Quarzwerke GmbH

THE NEPSI EUROPEAN SIGNATORIES





Council of European Employers
of the Metal, Engineering and
Technology-based industries



