

State of Silica Safety

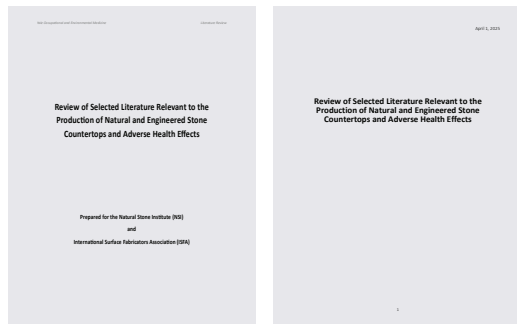
2024-25 Progress Report & 2026 Roadmap

Natural Stone Institute and our partners have mobilized unprecedented resources to combat the Silicosis Crisis: protecting workers and strengthening industry practices in an ever-shifting regulatory environment. This work has been strategic and deeply rooted in our commitment to ensure long-term safety and sustainability for every stone professional.

Scientific Research & Guidance

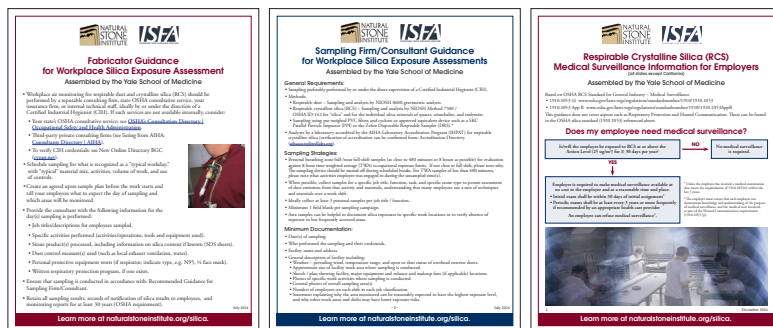
Together with the International Surface Fabricators Association (ISFA), we secured an active partnership with the Yale School of Medicine, bringing top-tier medical expertise directly into the stone industry's safety efforts. With this, we have delivered the first comprehensive, science-driven guidance documents specific to fabrication environments, including:

Literature Reviews of Exposure and Medical Studies



Comprehensive review and summary of key scientific studies performed by scientists. Exposure studies inform on tooling, techniques, and effectiveness of controls. Medical studies include silicosis exposure results from Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS). These resources now serve as the medical and scientific foundation for our industry's safety roadmap.

Guidance Documentation



To help natural stone companies navigate the complexities of regulatory compliance, guidance has been developed to break-down the actionable steps required to keep your employees safe.

COMING SOON: Respirator Use Guidance and Dry to Wet Fabrication Guidance

New Research

A new RCS Exposure Study based on industry-provided air sample data was developed through Yale's Research team. This research is based on the largest pool of U.S. air sampling data specifically from stone fabrication shops to date. It highlights achievements that are possible with engineering controls and the ongoing need for more education and improved safety practices. This study is available for purchase online.

COMING SOON: Economic impact study illustrating the investment required to comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations as well as a Review of Medical Surveillance from Industry Workers.



Education & Awareness

We have elevated industry expertise on silicosis risks and mitigation processes through a variety of educational offerings. Sessions urge participants to implement zero-tolerance policies on dry cutting, improve housekeeping practices, and to implement processes for air sampling and medical surveillance testing.

Silica & Slab Safety Certificate Program

Natural Stone Institute provides robust safety training for employees in the natural stone industry. This online certificate includes education and resources for preventing silicosis, safe slab handling and creating a safety program. It is available in both English and Spanish.

COMING SOON: Respirator Guidance Course, NSI Resources Course, Certificate Renewal Path

2,000+
stone professionals
directly trained

10,000+
indirect reach

In-Person Silica Training Courses

Numerous sessions have been conducted throughout the U.S. to reinforce safe and compliant techniques and controls; bringing training opportunities directly to the hands-on workers. These events have been coordinated in conjunction with major industry trade shows, as well as locally in high-reach markets.

Online Webinars

Natural Stone Institute has hosted several live webinars to bring stakeholders together to discuss shared challenges and provide real-world solutions. Along with our own events, NSI employees have shared expertise through the networks of other organizations sharing in the effort to combat this crisis.

Awareness Efforts

Natural Stone Institute actively engages regularly with our 12,000+ member employees from 2,100+ companies to keep them up to date on the latest educational offerings. We also keep industry trade publications up to date through direct communication and press releases, tapping into an expanded network of industry professionals. In addition to these known contacts, we strive to reach new workers who have not yet engaged with us through social media, google advertising, and member visits.

50,000+
visitors Silica
Resources webpage

10,000+
visitors to Silica
Training course

Advocacy

NSI has strengthened relationships with regulatory and legislative organizations and their representatives; ensuring that the voices of our members are heard.



Held multiple meetings with OSHA officials, leading to planned training sessions to occur in 2026 for agency personnel. This is an important step toward consistent and informed enforcement.



Collaborated with Cal/OSHA, answering technical questions and helping regulators better understand the realities of stone fabrication. NSI staff made multiple trips to California for key face-to-face meetings. We also coordinated numerous fabrication facility tours for public health officials, elected leaders, and regulatory agencies, giving them firsthand insight into modern fabrication practices and safety controls.



NSI closely monitors proposed legislation related to the silicosis crisis. Letters and outreach are sent regularly to keep leaders informed about our position on various topics. CEO Jim Hieb testified in front of a House Subcommittee share our opinion on federal protections for sellers of stone slab material.

Legal Subpoenas

NSI has responded to multiple subpoenas to maintain focus on long-term safety and regulatory progress.

Looking Ahead

We have elevated industry expertise on silicosis risks and mitigation processes through a variety of educational offerings. Sessions urge participants to implement zero-tolerance policies on dry cutting, improve housekeeping practices, and to implement processes for air sampling and medical surveillance testing.



RESEARCH



EDUCATION



ADVOCACY

Scientific Research & Guidance

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- Complete the Stone Industry **Medical Surveillance Study** with Yale School of Medicine, addressing a gap in current research and providing updated data on worker health outcomes. The goal of this study will be to show that long-term career employees can remain healthy when working in facilities with effective controls and safety programs in place.
- Conduct a new **Economic Impact of Silica Regulation Compliance Study** illustrating the investment required to comply with OSHA and MSHA regulations, supporting both advocacy and practical understanding at fabrication facilities. The goal of this study will be to define realistic economic investments that can positively improve worker safety.
- Continue in collaboration with **ISFA** and other relevant industry groups serving the industry.

Education & Awareness

- Launch **two new silica-focused training courses** and streamline **Silica & Slab Safety Certificate** requirements and renewals..
- Continue producing **new guidance documents** to help fabricators remain proactive and compliant as regulations evolve. Guidance on **respiratory use** will be available soon, as well as guidance on **converting a fabrication shop from dry to wet processes** will also released soon.

Advocacy

- Further collaborate with **OSHA and MSHA** to align industry resources with regulatory expectations and reinforce evidence-based best practices.
- Provide clear **pathways for sellers of stone slab materials**, including stone distributors, quarries, and fabricators who resell slabs, to support **legislation** in Washington, D.C., aimed at addressing the rise of litigation impacting the industry. Without this legislation, it would become much more difficult for stone companies from all segments to secure appropriate **insurance coverage** for their employees.
- Address emerging **legal challenges**, including efforts by plaintiff attorneys to involve NSI in lawsuits, work that will safeguard the industry's ability to continue advancing safety initiatives.
- Support the development of a **licensure program** to regulate the flow of slab materials to only registered fabricators.

Renewed Commitment

The progress made over the past two years has been substantial, but our work is not finished. In 2026, we will continue investing in research, education, advocacy, and collaboration, ensuring that every member of the stone industry has the tools and knowledge needed to protect their workforce and operate with confidence.

This is long-term work. It is essential work. And together, we will continue leading the industry forward with transparency and an unwavering commitment to safety.

Financial Support

Natural Stone Institute has invested significant financial resources to accelerate research, training, and safety advancements industry-wide. Through grants, and member donations, and partnerships, money has been raised and strategically distributed to maximize progress.

\$500,000
2026 FUNDRAISING GOAL

We need your help to continue.
To pledge your financial support, visit the link below
or contact jim@naturalstoneinstitute.org.

