



Support for people diagnosed with silicosis

Making a work injury claim

If you're concerned that you have been exposed to silica dust and you have not yet been assessed, speak with your doctor. Your doctor can consider your work and exposure history and advise whether you need lung function testing, chest imaging or referral to a respiratory or occupational physician. You can also check whether you are eligible for lung screening through [WorkerLungCheck.sa.gov.au](https://www.workerlungcheck.sa.gov.au)

Silicosis may not cause noticeable symptoms in its early stages. Continued exposure to silica dust may increase the risk of the disease progressing, which is why early assessment and preventing further exposure are important. If you've been diagnosed with silicosis we understand that you may be worried or anxious about what this means for you and your family. We're here to support you to understand what treatment and support services you can access through the Return to Work scheme to manage your condition.

How do I make a work injury claim?

If your employer is registered with the Return to Work scheme, ReturnToWorkSA will arrange for your claim to be assessed and managed. If your employer is self-insured, you will generally need to make a claim directly with that employer. If you're unsure, call us on **08 8233 2545** and we can help you identify the correct claims pathway.

If your employer is registered with ReturnToWorkSA or you're unsure what to do, it's important that you call us on **08 8233 2545** as soon as possible after your diagnosis so we can start your claim process. ReturnToWorkSA has established a dedicated team to assess and manage silicosis claims.

A Claims Officer will contact you to discuss your diagnosis, work history and the claims process. Depending on your circumstances, they may also arrange discussions with your employer and request further medical or employment information.

You may be asked about your employment and silica-exposure history, including details of any workplace health monitoring, lung screening or medical assessments you have undergone.

Silicosis claims

Call us on **08 8233 2545** Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5.00pm or email us at **silicosis@rtwsa.com**.

What support will I receive?

If your claim is accepted, you may be entitled to support based on your circumstances and the requirements of the *Return to Work Act 2014*. This may include income support, reasonable and necessary medical treatment, rehabilitation services, equipment and, where the relevant eligibility requirements are met, lump-sum compensation. Your Claims Officer will explain the support available to you.

Returning to work after a silicosis diagnosis

Your Claims Officer will work with you, your employer and medical experts to determine how your silicosis diagnosis affects your return to work.

Some people diagnosed with silicosis may be able to return to their current role, while others may need to seek alternative employment to avoid further exposure to silica dust.

If you have capacity to return to work but cannot safely return to your previous role, your Claims Officer can discuss suitable employment, retraining and job-placement options with you. The support available will depend on your accepted injury, capacity for work and individual circumstances.

This may include referring you to a job placement service where you'll work with a consultant who will assess your employment background and consider your transferable skills. They will assist you to develop a plan which will help you to build relevant job skills so that you can gain suitable employment.

A silicosis diagnosis can create uncertainty about your work and future. Your Claims Officer will work with you to understand your skills, experience and medical restrictions and to explore safe and sustainable work options.

If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can call ReturnToWorkSA on 13 18 55 through the National Relay Service (NRS) www.relayservice.gov.au.

For languages other than English call the Interpreting and Translating Centre on 1800 280 203 and ask for an interpreter to call ReturnToWorkSA on 13 18 55.

For braille, audio or e-text of the information in this fact sheet call 13 18 55.