



# OSHA Regional News Release

**U.S. Department of Labor  
Office of Public Affairs**

**Region 6**

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US Department of Labor's OSHA cites Venetian Marble & Granite in Helotes, Texas, for exposing workers to excessive levels of respirable silica

**HELOTES, Texas** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has cited Venetian Marble & Granite in Helotes with 10 serious safety and health violations after an inspection found that workers were exposed to unsafe levels of crystalline silica particles. Proposed penalties total \$41,300.

"This company jeopardized the health of its workers by exposing them to respirable silica above OSHA's established limits," said Jeff Funke, director of OSHA's San Antonio Area Office.

OSHA's San Antonio office initiated a safety and health inspection on Nov. 8, 2010, at the company's facility on Western Oak Drive and determined that employees were exposed to respirable crystalline silica particles while grinding, sanding and buffing countertop products such as natural granite, quartz and solid surfaces.

The agency alleges that the company failed to ensure levels of crystalline silica met safety standards, provide employees with required respiratory protection, determine that employees were medically fit to wear respiratory protection, follow proper procedures to lock out/tag out accidental energy start-up prior to servicing and performing maintenance on machinery, properly guard a table saw and cut off saw, and train employees on the use of hazardous chemicals. A serious citation is issued when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

Venetian Marble & Granite, which employs about 45 workers who manufacture custom countertops for residential and commercial applications, has 15 business days from receipt of the citations to comply, request an informal conference with OSHA's area director in San Antonio or contest the citations and penalties before the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission.

Employers and employees with questions about workplace safety and health standards can call OSHA's



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San Antonio office at 210-472-5040 or the agency's toll-free hotline at 800-321-OSHA (6742) to report workplace incidents, fatalities or situations posing imminent danger to workers.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to ensure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.