



ARDEX TECHNICAL UPDATE

Update 102

February 24, 2017

To: ARDEX Corporate (select), Sales Managers, Sales Professionals

From: ARDEX Technical

Understanding the Presence of Crystalline Silica in Unsanded Materials

We are writing to address some industry confusion regarding unsanded patching and skim coating materials, such as ARDEX SKM, ARDEX FEATHER FINISH, ARDEX FORTI FINISH and similar competitive products.

While sand is ***not*** an added component in these ARDEX unsanded product formulas, crystalline silica (sand) is listed as an ingredient on their safety data sheets (SDSs). This is due to the fact that crystalline silica is a naturally occurring component in several raw materials that are a part of the ARDEX unsanded product formulas, specifically limestone and Portland cement. Due to crystalline silica's presence in limestone and Portland cement (as reported on their respective SDSs), and because both of these raw materials are part of the ARDEX formulas, a range of the "trace" silica that ultimately appears in our finished products must be estimated and reported.

It must be emphasized, ***any product containing limestone and/or Portland cement or mineral fillers*** will always have some amount of crystalline silica; the amount will differ due to the variability within the mined materials themselves. Additionally, if that amount exceeds the OSHA 0.1% threshold by weight, it is required to be reported on an SDS under Section 3 as an ingredient, and the hazards associated with crystalline silica must be reported in Section 2. Forgoing this requirement would be a violation of OSHA hazardous communication standards.

The rules for California Prop 65 disclosure in Section 15 are significantly more stringent. If there is any amount of ***respirable*** crystalline silica in the product (which is likely less than the 0.1% OSHA threshold), then it must still be disclosed that the product contains a potentially carcinogenic material. Respirable silica is a smaller subset of the total silica present and nearly always exists in its natural form. In fact, California law requires the manufacturer to give proper warning of ***any*** amount of a potentially carcinogenic product.

ARDEX's disclosure of crystalline silica traces, for example, from 0.1 - 0.25% in ARDEX FEATHER FINISH, reflects only the content that results from the product formulation components as required for product performance and the naturally occurring impurities of these raw materials. Some manufacturers in this segment are publishing SDSs with no reference to crystalline silica. We believe that it would be prudent for all customers, and particularly end-users, to require in writing that the SDS as published by these manufacturers is accurate and that proper and complete testing that demonstrates compliance with both OSHA and California Prop 65 has been conducted.

ARDEX Americas guarantees that crystalline silica is not added during production or as a part of the formulation in its unsanded materials. Further, traces that are found are due only to the fact that natural raw materials contain extremely low amounts of these impurities.

Should you have questions on this information, please contact the ARDEX Technical Service Department.

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