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The below answer sheet is for your own self-assessment.
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The Future of Mineral Stone – Understanding Zero-Silica Mineral Surfaces

1. **What types of engineered stone benchtops, panels, and slabs were made illegal in Australia on July 1, 2024?**

   Since 1 July 2024, engineered stone benchtops, panels, and slabs containing at least 1% crystalline silica have been illegal across Australia.

2. **What were the main attractions of crystalline silica as a component? In other words, why was it included in surface material products in the first place?**

   The main attractions of crystalline silica were hardness, durability, consistency, ease of fabrication, and cost compared to natural stone.

3. **What raw materials do the various zero-crystalline-silica products that are now available typically contain?**

   Instead of quartz, the formulation is made mostly from glass, which is a non-crystalline, or amorphous, form of silica. Chemically it's still silicon dioxide, but the structure is completely different. It doesn't have the ordered crystal lattice that makes quartz dust so harmful.

4. **How are zero-crystalline-silica benchtop products manufactured?**

   The raw materials are blended with a resin binder and pigments, then compacted into slabs under pressure. The slabs are cured with heat, calibrated to an even thickness, and then polished or textured to the final finish.

5. **What's the best way for specifiers to identify benchtop products that are genuinely sustainable?**

   Specifiers should look for products that carry independent, internationally recognised certifications, such as NSF and Greenguard.

Competency Codes: PC12, PC24, PC31, PC45