



# KNOW WHAT QUARTZ SURFACING YOU ARE BUYING

The KSA receives a lot of complaints about quartz surfacing that is chipping, staining and discolouring. When we investigate, we often find that the consumer does not have the stone they thought they were getting and have been sold a product of inferior quality with reduced durability.

Quartz is a popular choice for countertops. As this product continues to grow in demand, more and more imports are making their way into the country. But, how can you be sure that the unknown brand you are being introduced to is of a comparable quality to the more established and recognised brands of quartz surfacing material available in South Africa?

Quartz countertops are man-made products comprising around 90% quartz with the balance made up of resins, polymers and pigments. Sadly, there are products being sold on the market now that are produced without adhering to requirements regarding the ratios of, and quality of ingredients used. By compromising the ratio and quality of material composites, the stone becomes inferior and unable to uphold the same standards as products manufactured to the correct ratios and with the right ingredients.

**Noticeable problems as a result of incorrect ratios/quality during manufacturing include the following:**

- Inferior quartz surfacing is often manufactured using higher percentages of resin with less quartz which can result in resin pooling. This means the countertop can become more flexible and likely to bend during transportation. A high-quality quartz product will contain approximately 93% quartz.
- As the amount of resin is not controlled, the amount of pigment can also vary. This can result in colour and pattern inconsistencies in sections of the material.
- Poor quality and/or toxic pigments that contain lead or cadmium are also often added to these inferior products. As these countertops are often used in food preparation areas, like the kitchen, these toxins are then introduced to digestive system and can prove dangerous.



- Excessive amounts of formaldehyde are also often added during the manufacturing process; and these fumes can continue to be released for up to 5 years. This can be particularly harmful in an indoor application if there is poor ventilation.
- There are often inconsistencies in the thickness of the slabs.
- Well manufactured quartz surfacing is subject to both high heat and pressure. Inferior quality stone is usually baked at a lower temperature for a shorter time and is subject to less pressure during the manufacturing process. This makes it more porous, less stable and more prone to bending or breakage, chipping or scratching.
- Be aware that some products are not quartz based but actually marble based. The products may appear to look the same but it is vital that you check this, as a marble-based product will be considerably more vulnerable to scratches, chips and stains.

It is important to note that most of these inconsistencies cannot be detected visually meaning that they only become apparent once the product is installed on site or once they have been in use for some time.

As there is no government body checking these imports to ensure they meet a minimum standard we encourage you to take up the responsibility and check the source and warranties of all quartz surfacing you are quoted on. There are certain



international standards that these slabs should meet in order to ensure that the product you are receiving is not substandard and/or toxic. Standards which are of importance include: ISO 9001 for quality management, American Greenguard standards and also the International Health and Safety Foundation standards which ensure that the countertop surfaces are qualified for unrestricted use in the kitchen and food preparation environment.

Protect yourself – ensure you purchase your quartz surfacing from a reputable source using a brand with a proven track record and a good warranty. Never ever rely on price alone to dictate your choice because we can guarantee you will be replacing your stone in a matter of years.

