



Safety Tip of the Week

Your Safety Is Our Business®

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Hazards of Silica Dust

Silica is present in both work and non-work environments and exposure to crystalline silica dust has long been known to cause a disease called “silicosis.” When you inhale crystalline silica the lung tissue reacts by developing fibrous tissue around trapped silica particles.



Appropriate Protection:

- Keep awareness high--which is the key to preventing silicosis. Recognize when silica dust may be generated and plan ahead to eliminate or control the dust at the source.
- Use proper respiratory protection when point of operation controls cannot keep exposures below the recommended exposure limit.
- Use Type CE pressure-demand, or positive-pressure, abrasive-blasting respirators when sandblasting.
- Wear only a N95 NIOSH-certified respirator, if respirator protection is required. Do not alter the respirator. Do not wear a tight-fitting respirator with a beard or mustache that prevents a good seal between the respirator and the face.
- Always use dust control systems when they are available and keep them well maintained.
- Be aware that high silica concentrations can occur inside and outside enclosed areas during operations such as concrete or masonry sawing or abrasive blasting.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke in areas where sandblasting is being done or where silica dust is being generated.
- Wear disposable or washable over-garments at the work site.
- Wash your hands and face before eating, drinking, or smoking and vacuum (don't blow) dust from your clothing.
- Shower if possible and change into clean clothes before leaving the job site to prevent contamination of cars, homes, and other work areas.
- Remember: If it's silica, it's not just dust.

Make safety a reality and don't be a fatality!!