

OSHA SILICA ENFORCEMENT ARE YOU COMPLIANT?



WHEN DOES THE NEW SILICA RULE TAKE EFFECT?

Saturday, September 23rd

WHAT IS CRYSTALLINE SILICA?

Crystalline silica is an industrial material found abundantly in the earth's crust. Quartz - the most common form of silica - is a component of sand, stone, rock, concrete, brick, block, and mortar. Materials containing quartz are found in a variety of workplaces.

HOW CAN EXPOSURE TO CRYSTALLINE SILICA AFFECT WORKERS' HEALTH?

Silica dust is hazardous when very small (respirable) particles are inhaled. These respirable dust particles can penetrate deep into the lungs and cause disabling and sometimes fatal lung diseases, including silicosis, lung cancer, and kidney disease.

HOW DOES EXPOSURE TO CRYSTALLINE SILICA OCCUR?

Occupational exposure to respirable crystalline silica occurs when cutting, sawing, drilling, and crushing of concrete, brick, ceramic tiles, rock, and stone products.

Occupational exposure also occurs in operations that process or use large quantities of sand, such as foundries and the glass, pottery and concrete products industries. OSHA estimates that more than 2.3 million workers in the United States are potentially exposed to dust containing crystalline silica with nearly 90% of those workers employed in the construction industry.

WHAT INDUSTRIES AND OPERATIONS RISK EXPOSURE?

Exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS) can occur during common construction tasks, such as: when using masonry saws, grinders, drills, jackhammers and hand held powered chipping tools; when operating vehicle-mounted drilling rigs or crushing machines; milling; when using heavy equipment for demolition.

WHAT DOES THE STANDARD REQUIRE?

The standard requires employers to limit worker exposures to RCS and to take other steps to protect workers, such as providing HEPA vacuums, dust extraction, eye protection and respirators.

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