

Respirable Crystalline Silica – Compliance Tools for Your Company

OSHA's new silica standard is now fully implemented; OSHA inspectors are trained and they are citing employers for failing to meet the various requirements of the standard. In fact, it is expected that silica will make the TOP 10 list of OSHA citations in 2019. Making sure your program, processes and training are all compliant is an important business consideration. OSHA increased their fines again this year, a simple violation can cost over \$13,000.

Crystalline Silica is a carcinogen found in sand, stone, and artificial stone, and it can cause silicosis – a chronic disease that causes scarring of the lungs, reducing their ability to function - leading to serious health effects including cancer. Silicosis is incurable but entirely preventable. Around 2.3 million American **workers who grind, drill, cut, blast, or mill** materials containing crystalline silica are at put at risk each year. Below you will find details and resources for compliance tailored to your industry.

Compliance in Construction Industry

OSHA's more strict standards are intended to save lives. OSHA understands that stricter standards can be tough to implement, so there is flexibility built in for smaller employers. You may have heard of 'Table 1'. Per OSHA:

"Employers can either use the control methods laid out in Table 1 of the construction standard, or they can measure workers' exposure to silica and independently decide which dust controls work best to limit exposures to the PEL in their workplaces."

Regardless of which exposure control method is used, all construction employers covered by the standard are required to:

- *Establish and implement a written exposure control plan that identifies tasks that involve exposure and methods used to protect workers, including procedures to restrict access to work areas where high exposures may occur.*
- *Designate a competent person to implement the written exposure control plan.*
- *Restrict housekeeping practices that expose workers to silica where feasible alternatives are available.*
- *Offer medical exams-including chest X-rays and lung function tests-every three years for workers who are required by the standard to wear a respirator for 30 or more days per year.*
- *Train workers on work operations that result in silica exposure and ways to limit exposure.*
- *Keep records of exposure measurements, objective data, and medical exams."*

<https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/silicacrystalline/construction.html#VideosTable1Tasks>

RESOURCES

- The control methods in table 1 as they relate to small employers:
<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3902.pdf>
- OSHA has provided [this](#) PowerPoint presentation that can assist with training construction workers. We have added links to a video on protecting employees and OSHA's Silica Standard for Construction website at the end of the presentation.
- Information on abrasive blasting materials: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3697.pdf>
- The Association of General Contractors has worked with OSHA to create this FAQ page which has a lot of great information:
https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/silicacrystalline/construction_info_silica.html

RESOURCES

- Compliance assistance for small employers can be reviewed here: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3911.pdf>
- Information on abrasive blasting materials: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3697.pdf>
- OSHA Fact Sheet: <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3682.pdf>
 - <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3681.pdf>
- How to remove silica dust from clothing: https://www.silica-safe.org/training-and-other-resources/manuals-and-guides/asset/NIOSH_mining_Clothes-Cleaning-Process.pdf
- Medical Monitoring – a guide for employers: https://www.silica-safe.org/training-and-other-resources/manuals-and-guides/asset/The-Silica-Standard-medical-monitoring_Final_.pdf

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