

CBS Corporate Safety and Environmental Affairs

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New OSHA Rule on Respirable Crystalline Silica

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued a final rule to address respirable crystalline silica exposure in the workplace. This exposure can cause silicosis, lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and kidney disease. Crystalline silica can be found in soil, sand, granite, and many other minerals. Chipping, cutting, drilling, or grinding may cause respirable size particles.

OSHA estimates the new rule can save more than 600 lives and prevent more than 900 cases of silicosis each year. Three types of silicosis are as follows:

- Chronic is the most common and occurs after 15-20 years of moderate to low exposure.
- Accelerated occurs after 5-10 years of high exposure levels.
- Acute can occur after just a few months of exposure at extremely high levels.

Silica exposures here at CBS include spreading or removing sand on productions; masonry repair, demolition, and construction; concrete saw cutting or core drilling; and boiler refractory repair or installation.

As protection against respirable crystalline silica exposure, employees should:

- Wear a N95 NIOSH certified respirator when required.
- Wear disposable or washable work clothes.
- Use shower facilities if available.
- Vacuum the dust from clothes or change into clean clothing before leaving the work site.
- Participate in training, exposure monitoring, health screenings, and surveillance programs to monitor any adverse health effects caused by crystalline silica exposures.
- Be aware of the operations and job tasks creating crystalline silica exposures in your workplace environment and know how to protect yourself.

If you have any questions about crystalline silica or the new OSHA rule, please contact David Templeman, Director, Environmental Health and Safety, at David.Templeman@cbs.com

Key Provisions of the New Rule

Although the final rule takes effect on June 23, 2016, the compliance date for most requirements is June 23, 2018.

Some key provisions of the final rule include:

- The permissible exposure limit (PEL) for respirable crystalline has been reduced.
- Employers are required to use engineering controls (such as water or ventilation) to limit worker exposure to PEL and/or provide respirators when engineering controls cannot adequately limit exposures.
- Medical exams must be provided to monitor exposed workers and information provided about their lung health.

To learn more about the new rule and compliance deadline requirements, please click [here](#).