

# FINAL SILICA EXPOSURE RULE

## CRYSTALLINE SILICA

An abundant natural material, crystalline silica is found in stone, soil, and sand. It is also found in concrete, brick, mortar, and other construction materials. Crystalline silica comes in several forms, with quartz being the most common. Quartz dust is respirable crystalline silica, which means it can be taken in by breathing.

## OSHA REGULATIONS

Reduces the permissible exposure limit (PEL) for respirable crystalline silica to 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air, averaged over an 8-hour shift. Requires employers to: use engineering controls (such as water or ventilation) to limit worker exposure to the PEL; provide respirators when engineering controls cannot adequately limit exposure; limit worker access to high exposure areas; develop a written exposure control plan, offer medical exams to highly exposed workers, and train workers on silica risks and how to limit exposures([osha.gov](http://osha.gov)).

*Both standards contained in the final rule take effect on June 23, 2016*

## QUESTIONS TO ASK?

Think again!

### **Q: What are the hazards of crystalline silica?**

A: Inhaling crystalline silica dust can be fatal, and can cause silicosis. The dust enters the lungs' causing scar tissue which begins to reduce the lungs ability to take in oxygen.

### **Q: What can employees do to protect against exposures to crystalline silica?**

A: Wear only a N95 NIOSH certified respirator, wear only a type CE abrasive-blast supplied-air respirator for abrasive blasting.

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*“The very best thing you can do to protect a company is to protect the workers who are, in effect, the heart and soul of that company. The two go together” – Michael Mangum*

*National Asphalt Pavement Association director*

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## HOW IS OSHA ADDRESSING EXPOSURE?

OSHA requires hazard communication training for workers exposed to crystalline silica, and requires a respirator program until engineering controls are implemented.

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## MAS can analyze personal air samples for:

- Dust exposure
- Types of dust
- Other minerals and particles of interest



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