

Don't Hold Your Breath!

Silica is found in many materials common on construction sites, including sand, concrete, rock, mortar, and brick. When workers cut, grind, abrasive blast, jackhammer or perform other tasks that disturb these materials, dust containing crystalline silica can be released into the air. Workers who inhale this dust are at risk. Silica can cause serious, sometimes fatal illnesses including a lung disease called silicosis, lung cancer, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). It has also been linked to other illnesses such as kidney disease.

What can you do to protect your lungs?

- 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.
- 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 concrete cutting is being done, or where silica dust is being generated.
- Use vacuums with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters or wet-sweeping for clean-up.
- Never dry sweep or blow dust with compressed air.

Do This!

- Control overall dust exposures by minimizing the dust around work areas.
- Train workers about health effects of silica dust and good work practices that reduce dust.
- Use vacuums with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters or wet-sweeping for clean-up.
- Wet down surfaces before clean-up.
- Wear respirators, where necessary, to avoid breathing dusts.

Don't do this!

- **Dry sweep or blow dust with compressed air.**
- **Congregate / take breaks in silica producing work areas.**
- **Begin any work assignment involving silica w/o proper P.P.E.**
- **Work in areas with poor ventilation.**
- **Use Vacuums without (HEPA) filters.**





Safety Bulletin

Subject _____

Date _____

Name (Print)

Signature