

Occupational lung disease kills approximately 100 workers every year.

SILICA

Silica, also known as quartz, is a mineral that is commonly found in soil, sand, concrete, rock, and granite. Silica dust is generated by cutting, blasting, drilling, and breaking down materials that contain silica. Inhaling the dust can cause serious health problems. Silica is a big concern in the construction and masonry industry

When silica is inhaled, it travels deep into the lungs and sits there. Over time, silica dust can cause a disease called *silicosis* and lung cancer. Silica dust has also been linked to kidney disease.

OSHA STANDARD

Studies and research has prompted OSHA to adopt a pretty strict standard on Respirable Crystalline Silica. Beginning September 23rd. 2017 the new Silica requirements will be:

- Permissible Exposure Limit = **50 micrograms per cubic meter of air (8 hour shift)**
- Employers must use engineering controls to limit Silica exposure to below the PEL
- Provide respirators when engineering controls do not adequately lower exposure level
- Provide medical exams to highly exposed employees

EXPOSURE CONTROLS

It is important for employers to monitor employee exposure to respirable Silica dust, and implement corrective actions if they are overexposed. The best way to do so is with the hierarchy of controls.

Engineering Controls:

- Wet Method
- Dust Vacuums
- Fans and Ventilation Devices

Administrative Controls:

- Warning Signs to notify employees of Silica dust
- Silica Awareness Training

Personal Protective Equipment:

- Respirators

