Preventing Silicosis and Deaths in Construction Workers

WARNING!
Exposure to respirable crystalline silica dust during construction activities can cause serious or fatal respiratory disease.

Take the following steps to protect yourself from exposure to crystalline silica:

- Be aware of the health effects of respirable crystalline silica (see NIOSH Alert: Request for Assistance in Preventing Silicosis and Deaths in Construction Workers).
- Participate in any medical examinations, air monitoring, or training programs offered by your employer.
- Substitute less hazardous abrasive-blasting materials for those containing crystalline silica.
- If substitution is not possible, use engineering controls such as blast-cleaning machines, cabinets, dust collectors, wet methods, and local exhaust ventilation to minimize exposures to silica dust.
- Always use the dust control systems and keep them well maintained.
- Be aware that the highest silica concentrations may occur inside enclosed areas during concrete or masonry sawing or abrasive blasting.
- Use Type CE pressure-demand or positive-pressure, abrasive-blasting respirators when sandblasting.

Change into disposable or washable work clothes at the worksite.
- Do not eat, drink, or use tobacco products in dusty areas such as sandblasting areas.
- Wash hands and face before eating, drinking, or smoking outside dusty areas.
- Shower and change into clean clothes before leaving the worksite.

Construction worker sawing masonry without dust control or a respirator.

Please tear out and post. Distribute copies to workers. See back of sheet to order complete Alert.
For additional information, see **NIOSH Alert: Request for Assistance in Preventing Silicosis and Deaths in Construction Workers** [DHHS (NIOSH) Publication No. 96–112]. Single copies of the Alert are available free from the following:

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