

Inhaling Silica Dust Can Cause Deadly Lung Disease



Crystalline silica is found in granite, artificial/engineered stone, and other stone products.

When workers cut, grind, drill, or polish these materials, very small particles of crystalline silica dust get in the air.

Breathing in these very small (respirable) crystalline silica particles can cause irreversible scarring in the lungs, trouble breathing, permanent disability, and death.

Crystalline silica dust can also cause lung cancer, kidney damage, and autoimmune disease.

Employers Must Ensure that Workers are Protected from Exposure to Crystalline Silica

Minimize exposures through effective engineering controls and work practices.



Provide and ensure proper use of respirators until exposures are reduced below the PEL or if exposures cannot be reduced with engineering controls and work practices.

Provide initial and periodic medical examinations to exposed workers.



Assess employee exposures to crystalline silica dust to assure they are not above the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) permissible exposure limit (PEL) of $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, averaged over an 8-hour work day.

Train workers on the health hazards, workplace exposures, measures implemented to protect workers, and their roles in protection.

Learn more about worker exposures to silica at the [NIOSH Crystalline Silica web page](#).

Go to www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/silicacrystalline/ for more information.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health