proActive Safety Services

Weekly Safety Meeting

Train. Protect. Prevent.

Protecting Yourself Around Silica Dust

Silica dust is one of the most hazardous elements you will face when you are working on construction projects and in some manufacturing facilities. With the Occupational Health and Safety Administration implementing a new silica policy it is vital to understand how to protect yourself and your co-workers when working around Silica.

Silica is a chemical element that is a hard and brittle crystalline solid, with a blue grey metallic luster. It is the 8th most common element in the universe by mass. It is most widely distributed in dust, sands, planetoids, and planets as various forms of silicon dioxide, or silicates. Over 90% of the Earth's crust is composed of silicate minerals, making silicon the second most abundant element in the earths crust.

Uses of silica include industrial construction with clays, silica sand, and stone. Silicates are used in Portland cement for mortar and stucco, and mixed with silica sand and gravel to make concrete for walkways, roads, and foundations. Silica is also used in white wear ceramics which include: porcelain, and traditional quartz based soda lime glass, and other specialty glasses.

So how do you protect yourself and your co-workers when working around silica?

1. Establish and implement a written exposure control plan that identifies tasks that involve exposure and methods used to protect workers, including procedures to restrict access to work areas where high exposures may occur.
2. Designate a competent person to implement the written exposure control plan.
3. Restrict housekeeping practices that expose workers to silica where feasible alternatives are available.
4. Offer medical exams that include chest X-rays and lung function tests every three years for workers who are exposed and wear a respirator for more than 30 days per year.
5. Train workers on work operations that result in silica exposure and ways to limit exposure.
6. Keep records of medical exams, exposure measurements, and objective data.

Be a leader and set the example of following the proper work procedures when you will be working around or creating silica dust.

Work Site Review: **Hazards/Safety Suggestions**

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Company Name: _____ Work Site Location: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____Finish Time: _____ Foreman/Supervisor: _____

Employee Signatures: **(continue on back of sheet if necessary)**

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

(My signature attests and verifies my understanding of and agreement to comply with, all company safety policies and regulations, and that I have not suffered, experienced , or sustained any recent job-related injury or illness)

Manager/Supervisor's Signature: _____

Disclaimer: The information and suggestions contained in these safety talks are believed to be reliable. However, the authors of the topics and the owners of this web site accept no legal responsibility for the correctness, sufficiency, or completeness of such information or suggestions contained within these topics. These guidelines do not super cede local, state, or federal regulations and must not be construed as a substitute for, or legal interpretation of, any OSHA regulations

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