

# FACT Sheet Crystalline Silica

Why should I worry about crystalline silica?

Each year about 300 people die from a disease called “silicosis”. Silicosis, an irreversible but preventable lung disease, is associated with exposure to crystalline silica. At least 1.7 million U.S. workers are exposed to respirable



crystalline silica in a variety of industries and occupations, including construction, sandblasting, and mining.

Diseases associated with crystalline silica exposure include silicosis, lung cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis, airway diseases, autoimmune disorders, and chronic renal disease.



Your industry has been identified by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) as having exposures to elevated levels of crystalline silica.

What Industries commonly use crystalline silica?

- Construction – especially demolition, heavy construction, masonry, roofing, and painting
- Manufacturing and distribution of construction materials – brick, concrete products, cut stone and stone products, abrasive products, sheet metal work
- Top, body, and upholstery repair shops and paint shops

How do I know if I have crystalline silica in my workplace?

Check labels and material safety data sheets that come with the products you use in your workplace. If you are working on older material that may contain crystalline silica – brick, concrete, stone products – and you are unable to obtain a material safety data sheet or contact the manufacturer or distributor, you may have to have the material analyzed at a certified laboratory for crystalline silica.

If there is crystalline silica in the products I work with, what do I need to do and where can I get help?

**At minimum**, you need to comply with the Hawai'i Occupational Safety and Health (HIOSH) [standards](#), regarding monitoring and measuring employee exposure to toxic materials and harmful physical agents (12-202-1) and if the levels exceed the Hawai'i permissible exposure limit (PEL) of 0.1 mg/m<sup>3</sup> and 0.05 mg/m<sup>3</sup>, you need to reduce levels through engineering controls (ventilation), work-practice controls (e.g. wet methods), and if necessary, personal protective equipment (PPE).

**Request** a FREE, confidential consultation – 808-586-9135 ([HIOSH Consultation & Training](#))

**Click on:** HIOSH's [Directive](#) on the National Emphasis Program for Crystalline Silica

**Click on** OSHA's [e-Tool for Silica](#)

**See** Silica [Checklist](#)