## NIOSH ALERT

## **Preventing Silicosis and Deaths in Construction Workers**

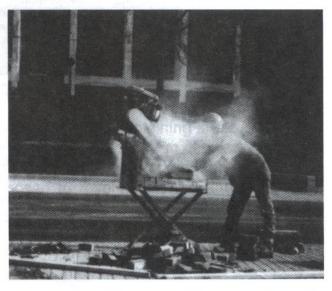
## **WARNING!**

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 positivepressure, 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.

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:

Publications Dissemination, EID
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
4676 Columbia Parkway
Cincinnati, OH 45226

Fax number: (513) 533–8573

Phone number: 1–800–35–NIOSH (1–800–356–4674)

E-mail: pubstaft@niosdt1.em.cdc.gov



U.S Department of Health and Human Services
Public Health Service
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National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health