

Continuous Miner Operator



Health Hazard Information Card HH-42

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration

Black lung and silicosis are two disabling and sometimes fatal lung diseases caused by overexposure to respirable coal mine dust. Even though technology and mining practices have continued

to improve control of airborne dust, miners are still contracting black lung. Samples collected from July 1, 2006, to June 30, 2007, on continuous mining machines indicate:



| Continuous Mining Machines | Valid Samples Collected | Percent Greater than the Standard | Average Percent Quartz* |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Operator Samples | 23,081 | 10.6 | 9.5 |
| MSHA Samples | 3,024 | 12.1 | 8.2 |
| All Samples | 26,105 | 10.8 | 8.3 |

*On entities with reduced standards.

Continuous mining machine operators who are exposed to respirable coal mine dust containing greater than 5% quartz are likely overexposed to quartz and are at a greater risk of developing lung disease. **At any given time there are approximately 200 continuous miners on a reduced standard due to quartz.**

MSHA has developed this guide to assist miners in using all available tools to **Control the Dust and Prevent Black Lung.**

You should always:

- ✓ Ensure the on-shift examination of respirable dust control parameters has been conducted.
- ✓ Maintain proper ventilation in accordance with the requirements of the approved ventilation plan (line curtain or tubing distance and air quantities).
- ✓ Maintain the water spray system in accordance with the requirements of the approved ventilation plan (operating type, number, pressure, and direction of sprays).
- ✓ Maintain scrubber systems in proper operating condition as designed or recommended by the manufacturer.
- ✓ Perform required daily and weekly scrubber examinations to ensure the scrubber is performing as designed.
- ✓ Position yourself in a safe location and in fresh air. Avoid positions downwind of dust generation sources if it can be done safely.
- ✓ Select and use properly fitted respirators when concentrations exceed the applicable respirable dust standard.
- ✓ Participate in your mine's free, confidential chest x-ray program. Mine operators are required to make these available to you at least every 5 years.

Examinations:

The on-shift examiner is required to check all controls specified in the approved ventilation plan such as: water sprays, water pressure, scrubber filter, ventilation controls and air quantities, etc.

If you have questions about coal mine health matters, please contact your local MSHA office or see the MSHA website at www.msha.gov.