

# Surface Coal Facilities – Preparation Plants and Shops



## Health Hazard Information Card HH-46

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 and quartz dust.

Surface facilities present unique problems in controlling exposure to respirable dust due to the variety of dust generation sources present. Crushers, shaker screens, chutes, belt transfer points, and other mining equipment are all potential sources of these harmful dusts. Therefore, miners working in surface facilities can be potentially exposed to excessive dust levels as the following sample results from January 1 to December 31, 2007, show.



Surface Facilities Respirable Dust Data			
Type of Sample	# Valid Samples	% Exceeding Standard	% Range of Quartz Content*
Operator	787	4.7	2 - 12
MSHA	2,942	1.0	0 - 40
All	3,729	1.8	0 - 40

\*Samples analyzed for quartz.

You should always:

- ✓ Wash down dusty surfaces. Never use compressed air to clean dust from equipment, floor and walls, or your clothing.

You should always (continued):

- ✓ Keep conveyor belts and adjacent walkways clean and free of spills and buildup.
- ✓ Utilize and maintain dust controls provided, such as exhaust fans, local exhaust ventilation and dust collection systems, while avoiding recirculation of previously generated dust.
- ✓ Use water sprays, seals, shrouds, covers, hoods or enclosures over crushers, screens, and at transfer points to prevent or reduce dust generation, emission, and dispersion. Maintain but never remove these and other provided control measures.
- ✓ Do not allow dust to build up in your work area.
- ✓ Use sweeping compound when using a broom to clean walkways and floors.
- ✓ Limit work activities in known dust generating areas.
- ✓ Keep doors and windows in cabs, control booths, and other enclosures closed.
- ✓ Inspect, repair, or report defects to door seals and window seals in cabs, control booths, and other enclosures.
- ✓ Inspect and replace pressurized enclosure filters according to manufacturers' recommendations.
- ✓ Follow established preventive maintenance program to ensure reliable and efficient operation of provided dust control systems.
- ✓ While not accepted as a primary control by MSHA, make use of properly selected and fitted respirators made available by the mine operator when dust concentrations exceed the dust standard.

If you have questions about coal mine health matters, please contact your local MSHA office or visit MSHA's website at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov).