

WHAT CAN I DO TO PROTECT MYSELF AND MY FAMILY?



TIPS FOR WORKERS EXPOSED TO CRYSTALLINE SILICA

Become Informed

- Be aware of the health effects of breathing air that has silica dust in it.
- Know what causes silica dust at your workplace.

Reduce Your Exposure to Dust

- Remember, even if there is no dust, you could still be at risk.
- Avoid working in dust whenever possible.
- Reduce the amount of silica dust by doing the following:
 - Use water sprays and ventilation when working in confined structures. For example:
 - Use a water hose to wet dust before it becomes airborne.
 - Use saws that add water to the blade.
 - Use drills that add water through the stem or have dust collection systems.
 - Use blast cleaning machines or cabinets to control dust.

Use Respirators When Needed

- When water sprays and ventilation alone are not enough to reduce silica dust levels, your employer **MUST** provide you with a properly fitted and selected respirator (e.g., particulate filter or airline supplied air respirator) designated for protection against crystalline silica.
- Changes should not be made to the respirator.
- Workers who use tight-fitting respirators may not have beards or mustaches because they do not let the respirator properly seal to the face.
- Sandblasting or abrasive blasting requires the highest level of protection, which is a type CE abrasive blasting respirator.

Participate in Medical Screening

- Take health (or lung screening) programs offered by your employer.

Practice Good Personal Hygiene at the Workplace

- Do not eat, drink, or use tobacco products in dusty areas.
- Wash hands and face before eating, drinking, or smoking outside dusty areas.
- Change into disposable or washable work clothes at the worksite.
- Shower (if possible) and change into clean clothes before leaving the worksite to prevent contamination of other work areas, cars, and homes.
- Park cars where they will not be contaminated with silica.

It is your employer's legal responsibility to provide a safe workplace. If you think you are not protected call OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA (6742) or go to the OSHA Web site: www.osha.gov.

Your employer must make sure that you have and use the proper protective equipment for reducing silica dust levels.

Taking time to protect yourself on the job is worth it.