

SILICA DUST EXPOSURE

OVER ►

Breathing in silica dust is one of the most common—and most dangerous—hazards in construction. Silica dust is invisible, but the risk is real. Identifying where silica is present and using the right controls keeps everyone safer and healthier on the job. Without proper controls, exposure may lead to a condition called silicosis.

Silica Dust Exposure Tips

- » Identify sources of silica in your workplace
- » Know the control measures for silica
- » Know how to identify the signs and symptoms of Silicosis



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SILICA DUST EXPOSURE

Identify Sources of Silica in Your Workplace

- Cutting or drilling concrete, stone, or masonry
- Grinding, sanding, or polishing concrete surfaces
- Demolition activities involving brick or block
- Mixing or sweeping dry concrete or mortar dust
- Working with artificial stone countertops
- Naturally occurring mineral abundant in rocks, sand and soil, and groundwork activities can disturb these materials generating hazardous airborne dust

Know the Control Measures for Silica

- Use wet cutting methods to keep dust from becoming airborne
- Use dust suppression systems, such as a water truck, to control dust generation during groundwork operations
- Ensure local exhaust ventilation is working properly
- Use enclosed or isolated work areas when possible
- Combine water and ventilation controls for added protection
- Wear appropriate respiratory protection when engineering controls aren't enough
- Do not eat or drink in areas that may contain silica and always wash your hands!

Know How to Identify the Signs and Symptoms of Silicosis

- Silicosis is a condition caused by inhaling too much silica over a long period of time. Silica dust particles act as tiny blades on the lungs. These particles create small cuts that can scar the lung tissue when inhaled through the nose or mouth. Scarred lungs do not open and close as well, making breathing difficult. Any level of silica exposure can result in silicosis
- Silicosis is a progressive condition, meaning it gets worse over time. Symptoms may start as an intense cough, shortness of breath, or weakness. Other possible symptoms include chest pain, fever, night sweats, weight loss, and respiratory failure. Silicosis can increase your risk of other respiratory infections and lung cancer