

SILICA SAFETY CHECKLIST

OSHA STANDARDS DESIGNED TO PROTECT WORKERS FROM RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA

Two new standards from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) are designed to protect workers from respirable crystalline silica, which can cause serious and sometimes life-threatening illnesses. The new standards establish permissible exposure limits and exclude tasks where exposures do not reach a certain amount over an eight-hour time-weighted average.

Refer to the two applicable OSHA standards — [OSHA Standard 1926.1153](#), Respirable Crystalline Silica, for construction activities, and [OSHA Standard 1910.1053](#), Respirable Crystalline Silica, for general industry and maritime activities—for complete details. Use this checklist to help make sure you meet the general industry and maritime standard.

Follow Table 1

Implement the engineering controls, work practices, and respiratory protection for tasks listed on Table 1. Employers who meet the [Table 1](#) controls are not required to measure respirable crystalline silica exposures to verify that levels are at or below the Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) (50 µg/m³) for workers engaged in those 18 specific tasks.

Assess Employee Exposure

For employees engaged in tasks other than those in Table 1, assess the exposure of each employee who is or may be exposed to respirable crystalline silica at or above the action level of 50 µg/m³ according to the methods described in the standard.

Designate Regulated Areas

Determine the areas in which an employee might be exposed to airborne concentrations of respirable crystalline silica in excess of the PEL and create a clearly delineated, regulated space, with signs at entrances and access to the area limited to people authorized to work there.

Create a Control Exposure Plan

Write a control exposure plan describing the tasks that involve exposure to respirable crystalline silica; the engineering controls, work practices, and respiratory protection to limit exposure; and the housekeeping measures used to limit exposure. Make sure the plan is readily available for employees and others to read and copy and that it is reviewed at least annually.

_____ **Provide Respiratory Protection**

Using Table 1 as a guide, provide respirators to affected employees. Also provide respiratory protection when exposures exceed the PEL or when employees are in a regulated area (even if they are not performing tasks) and might be exposed. Respirators are only allowed when engineering and work practice controls are not able to lower respirable crystalline silica levels to the PEL.

_____ **Practice Safe Housekeeping**

Prohibit the use of dry sweeping, dry brushing or compressed air to blow away dust unless other methods, such as wet sweeping or HEPA-filtered vacuuming, are not feasible.

_____ **Provide Medical Surveillance**

Make OSHA-compliant medical surveillance available to employees at no cost if they're exposed to respirable crystalline silica at or above PEL for more than 30 days per year.

_____ **Establish A Communication Program**

Communicate the hazards of respirable crystalline silica through labels, information sheets, signage and training. Employees should understand the dangers of exposure to respirable crystalline silica, the tasks that could result in exposure and the measures that are in place to reduce that exposure.

_____ **Keep Records**

Maintain records of all air monitoring and medical surveillance data for at least 30 years, unless a worker was employed for less than a year.