

Respirable Crystalline Silica

What is Respirable Crystalline Silica?

Crystalline silica is a common material that is found in construction materials such as sand, stone, concrete, brick, and mortar. When workers cut, grind, drill, or crush materials that contain crystalline silica, very small dust particles are created. These tiny particles (known as “respirable” particles) can travel deep into the workers’ lungs and cause silicosis, an incurable and sometimes deadly lung disease. Respirable crystalline silica can also cause lung cancer, other potentially debilitating respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and kidney disease. In most cases, these diseases occur after years of exposure to respirable crystalline silica.

Occupational Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica

Exposure to respirable crystalline silica can occur during common construction tasks, such as using masonry saws, grinders, drills, jackhammers and handheld powered chipping tools, operating vehicle mounted drilling rigs, milling, operating crushing machines, using heavy equipment for demolition or certain other tasks, and during abrasive blasting and tunneling operations. About two million construction workers are exposed to respirable crystalline silica in over 600,000 workplaces.



Delaware OSHA Consultation: How We Can Help



On-Site Hazard Assessment

The Delaware Consultation Program provides free on-site hazard assessments to assist employers in identifying and controlling potential respirable crystalline silica hazards.



Air Monitoring

Industrial Hygienists can perform free workplace air monitoring to ensure effectiveness of hazard controls and compliance with established regulatory limits.



Employee Training

Training performed by Consultants will give employees the knowledge to identify and protect themselves from respirable crystalline silica hazards.

