



Update Regarding OSHA's Silica Dust Regulations

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OSHA enacted a regulation dealing with silica dust in an attempt to curb lung cancer, silicosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and kidney disease in American workers by limiting their exposure to respirable crystalline silica. The regulation was composed of two standards, one for the construction industry and one for the general industry.

An estimated 2.3 million workers are exposed to respirable crystalline silica in their workplaces and this include 2 million construction workers who drill, cut, crush or grind silica-containing materials such as concrete and stone.

This regulation was originally intended to go into effect on June 23, 2017. Under the standard, all obligations of the employer were to commence June 23, 2017, except for the requirement for a sample analysis, which was to commence on June 23, 2018. However, the construction industry has a number of unique features warranting development of guidance materials for employers. In order to develop these guidance materials, OSHA postponed enforcement until September 23, 2017. OSHA announced that it will consider good faith efforts by employers to comply with the new silica rule for the first thirty days following the enforcement beginning September 23, 2017.

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