

Upcoming OSHA Compliance Dates -

Two OSHA standards that affect the construction industry have rapidly approaching compliance dates.

SILICA

The implementation date for the Silica Standard was postponed from June 23, 2017 to **September 23, 2017**. The new Silica Standard for Respirable Crystalline Silica requires:

- **Protecting employees to silica exposure** by using control method laid out in Table 1 of the construction standard, **or** employers can measure workers' exposure to silica and independently decide which dust controls work best to limit exposures to the PEL in their workplace.
- Establishing and implementing a **written exposure control plan** that identifies tasks that involve exposure and methods used to protect workers,
- Designate a **competent person** to implement the written exposure control plan.
- Restrict **housekeeping practices** that expose workers to silica where feasible alternatives are available.
- Offer **medical exams** -including chest X-rays and lung function tests **-every three years** for workers who are required by the standard to wear a respirator for 30 or more days per year.
- **Train workers** on work operations that result in silica exposure and ways to limit exposure.
- **Keep records** of workers' silica exposure and medical exams.

For more information on the OSHA Silica Standard, visit the OSHA website at:
<https://www.osha.gov/silica/>

RECORDKEEPING

The Recordkeeping electronic submission deadline for 2016 recordkeeping 300A forms has been moved to December 1, 2017. Follow the OSHA link for instructions on how to submit your information.

<https://www.osha.gov/injuryreporting/index.html>

Who has to electronic submit and when?

Establishments with 20-249 employees in certain high-risk industries (including Construction) must submit information from their 2016 Form 300A by **December 1, 2017**, and their 2017 Form 300A by July 1, 2018. Beginning in 2019 and every year thereafter, the information must be submitted by March 2.

Establishments with 250 or more employees in industries covered by the recordkeeping regulation, must submit information from their 2016 Form 300A by **December 1, 2017**. These same employers will be required to submit information from all 2017 forms (300A, 300, and 301) by July 1, 2018. Beginning in 2019 and every year thereafter, the information must be submitted by March 2.



Building Industry Employers
Of New York State

Monthly Toolbox Talk

BIE Safety Advisor

RESPIRATOR USE - With all the focus in the construction industry on Silica and companies getting ready for the regulatory changes regarding silica, there is a lot of focus on protecting workers, especially protecting workers from breathing Respirable Crystalline Silica. Besides engineering controls on equipment such as integrated water systems or HEPA Filtration vacuum systems, many companies chose to utilize respirators as a means of protection. That being said, let's review some respirator basics.

Why Respirators - Respirators protect workers against hazards such as insufficient oxygen environments, harmful dusts, fogs, smokes, mists, gases, vapors and sprays. These hazards have the potential to cause both immediate and long-term effects such as lung impairment, cancer, other diseases or even death. Employers should have a written respirator program that describes the proper procedures for selecting, medical evaluation, fit testing, training, using, caring, cleaning and sanitizing, inspecting and record keeping, storing and operating respiratory protective equipment.

Fit Testing & Seal Check - For proper protection, a worker must ensure the respirator they are using fits and functions properly. This means the equipment must be the proper size and seals to the face. A fit test is to be conducted by a competent person properly trained in fit testing to ensure the equipment is the correct size. A fit test is required before a worker uses any respirator for the first time, and then must also be conducted on at least an annual basis. Fit tests may need to be performed more frequently if there have been changes to a worker's body such as a significant gain or loss in weight, or facial changes such as dentures or broken jawbone.

A user seal check is to be performed by the worker prior to use of the respirator **every time** it is used. Use the positive and negative seal tests to verify the seal. Regular seal checks are necessary to ensure that contaminated air or particles will not leak into the respirator. If it doesn't fit or seal properly, don't use it!

Facial Hair & Respirators - It is critical to your personal health and wellbeing to ensure that you have a proper seal when wearing a respirator for protection. This means that workers need to be clean shaven before their shift begins, and possibly part way through, as beards, sideburns, moustaches, and stubble prevent a good seal and are not permitted with respirator use.

Choosing The Right Respirator - Choosing the right respirator to protect workers from airborne contaminants is essential. Respirators may not protect you from all contaminants, as different contaminants require different protection. There are limitations for each type of respirator and you must be familiar with them prior to using them. General precautionary information can be found in the manufacturer's operating manual. However, it may be necessary to seek the assistance of an experienced safety professional or industrial hygienist who is familiar with the actual workplace environment and contaminants. **Respirators that are used in the workplace must be NIOSH Approved Respirators!**

Types of Respirators-

- Disposable particulate respirators provide minimum protection and are typically used to protect against nuisance dusts and other particulates.
- Full mask and half mask air purifying respirators use cartridges and particulate filters. Air purifying respirators only work if you use the right cartridge and/or filter for the specific contaminant. Mechanical filters will block solid particles, while chemical filters soak up substances.
- Supplied air respirators can come in a variety of forms such as self contained breathing apparatuses, air hoods, full body suits, and airlines or work packs.

The Silica Standard references Table 1 to assist employers in selecting control methods and respiratory protection depending on the type of control method and area of silica exposure. When respirator use is required, Table 1 requires the use of respirators with an Assigned Protection Factor (APF) of 10 or 25. This leads many to ask, what types of respirators have an APF of 10 or 25? An assigned protection factor is an assigned level of protection to a type of respirator that is properly fitted to a worker. Below are some examples of respirators with various APF's.

Half Face Tight Fitting Respirators have an APF of 10. Respirators with an APF of 10 are pictured below:





Loose Fitting Powered Air Purifying Respirators have an APF of 25. Respirators with an APF of 25 are pictured below:



The Key To Respiratory Safety - First you must recognize that the airborne hazards exist through pre-job planning. It is vital to recognize all the chemicals, materials and hazards you may be exposed to, as well as conducting frequent hazard assessments and workplace inspections to help identify and control those hazards. A plan must be implemented to protect the health of all workers by assessing the environment, implementing engineering controls, having safety data sheets available, choosing the right respiratory protection and other personal protective equipment for the specific hazards. Protect your health and familiarize yourself with the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard, 29CFR1910.134.

Information for this Tool Box Talk was provided through SCSA and www.osha.gov.

