

# UTAH OSHA SAFETY LINE

NEWSLETTER



EDITOR | Jerry Parkstone

## Proposed Silica Rule Changes

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration today announced a proposed rule aimed at curbing lung cancer, silicosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and kidney disease in America's workers. The proposal seeks to lower worker exposure to crystalline silica, which kills hundreds of workers and sickens thousands more each year. After publication of the proposal, the public will have 90 days to submit written comments, followed by public hearings.

"Exposure to silica can be deadly, and limiting that exposure is essential," said Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health. "Every year, exposed workers not only lose their ability to work, but also to breathe. This proposal is expected to prevent thousands of deaths from silicosis, an incurable and progressive disease, as well as lung cancer, other respiratory diseases and kidney disease. We're looking forward to public comment on the proposal."

Once the full effects of the rule are realized, OSHA estimates that the proposed rule would result in saving nearly 700 lives per year and prevent 1,600 new cases of silicosis annually.

Exposure to airborne silica dust occurs in operations involving cutting, sawing, drilling and crushing of concrete, brick, block and other stone products and in operations using sand products, such as in glass manufacturing, foundries and sand blasting.

The proposal is based on extensive review of scientific and technical evidence, consideration of current industry consensus standards and outreach by OSHA to stakeholders, including public stakeholder meetings, conferences and meetings with employer and employee organizations.

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"The proposed rule uses common sense measures that will protect workers' lives and lungs, like keeping the material wet so dust doesn't become airborne," added Michaels. "It is designed to give employers flexibility in selecting ways to meet the standard."

The proposed rulemaking includes two separate standards, one for general industry and maritime employment, and one for construction. The agency currently enforces 40-year-old permissible exposure limits (PELs) for crystalline silica in general industry, construction and shipyards that are outdated, inconsistent between industries and do not adequately protect worker health. The proposed rule brings protections into the 21st century.

The proposed rule includes a new exposure limit for respirable crystal-

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line silica and details widely used methods for controlling worker exposure, conducting medical surveillance, training workers about silica-related hazards and recordkeeping measures.

OSHA rulemaking relies heavily on input from the public and the agency will conduct extensive engagement to garner feedback from the public through both written and oral comments. OSHA will accept public comments on the proposed rule for 90 days following publication in the Federal Register, followed by public hearings. Once public hearings conclude, members of the public who filed a notice of intention to appear can then submit additional post-hearing comments. Additional information on the proposed rule, including a video; procedures for submitting comments and the public hearings can be found at [www.osha.gov/silica](http://www.osha.gov/silica).

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure these conditions for America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards, and providing training, education and assistance. For more information, visit <http://www.osha.gov>.



## PLAN. PROVIDE. TRAIN.

*Three simple steps to preventing falls.*

**PLAN** ahead to get the job done safely: When working from heights, such as ladders, scaffolds, and roofs, employers must plan projects to ensure that the job is done safely. Begin by deciding how the job will be done, what tasks will be involved, and what safety equipment may be needed to complete each task. When estimating the cost of a job, employers should include safety equipment, and plan to have all the necessary equipment and tools available at the construction site. For example, in a roofing job, think about all of the different fall hazards, such as holes or skylights and leading edges, then plan and select fall protection suitable to that work, such as personal fall arrest systems (PFAS).

**PROVIDE** the right equipment: Workers who are six feet or more above lower levels are at risk for serious injury or death if they should fall. To protect these workers, employers must provide fall protection and the right equipment for the job, including the right kinds of ladders, scaffolds, and safety gear. Different ladders and scaffolds are appropriate for different jobs. Always provide workers with the kind they need to get the job done safely.

For roof work, there are many ways to prevent falls. If workers use personal fall arrest systems (PFAS), provide a harness for each worker who needs to tie off to the anchor. Make sure the PFAS fits, and regularly inspect all fall protection equipment to ensure it's still in good condition and safe to use.

**TRAIN** everyone to use the equipment safely: Falls can be prevented when workers understand proper set-up and safe use of equipment, so they need training on the specific equipment they will use to complete the job. Employers must train workers in hazard recognition and in the care and safe use ladders, scaffolds, fall protection systems, and other equipment they'll be using on the job. OSHA has provided numerous materials and resources that employers can use during toolbox talks to train workers on safe practices to avoid falls in construction. Falls from ladders, scaffolds and roofs can be prevented and lives can be saved through three simple steps: Plan, Provide and Train. For more information please go to: <https://www.osha.gov/stopfalls/index.html#plan>



## Rocky Mountain States Stand Down for Construction Fall Safety

Falls are the leading cause of death in construction, accounting for one third of all work-related deaths in the industry. In 2010 there were 774 total fatalities in the construction industry. Of those 774 fatalities 264 were from falls. To protect worker, employers must provide fall protection and the right equipment for the job, including the right kinds of ladders, scaffolds and safety gear. Employers must also provide training on the proper setup and safe use of specific equipment they will use to complete the job. Falls can be prevented and lives can be saved through three simple steps: plan, provide, and train.

The Rocky Mountain States Stand Down for Construction Fall Safety will take place on October 1, 2013. This voluntary Stand Down can be a very helpful in focusing all workers in the importance of safe work practices. A kick-off meeting will be webcast to meeting locations across the six states that make up OSHA Region 8. For more information on the Stand Down, please go to: <http://rmecosha.com/rmstanddownfalls/>

### Compliance Corner

Question: What is the recommendation for health care providers exposed to needles sticks and wearing opened toes shoes in a clinical setting. I understand the blood borne pathogen rule but I need a little clarification. Thank you

Answer: The employer is required to do an assessment of the workplace to identify possible exposures, and then provide a way to eliminate exposure of the employees to that hazard. If there is the possibility of exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials (OPIM), the bloodborne pathogen standard, 29 CFR 1910.1030, requires the employer to provide, at no cost to the employee, appropriate personal protective equipment such as, but not limited to, gloves, gowns, eye protection, shoe covers, laboratory coats, or other equipment deemed necessary. Any shoe that is worn outside of the workplace (open toed or not) are not considered personal protective equipment, so a shoe cover would be required to ensure that blood or OPIM cannot pass through to or reach employees clothes/shoes.

As for needle sticks, just like the shoes, the employer is responsible for identifying hazards and eliminate the exposure to the employees. In the case of needlesticks, Engineering Controls must be the primary means used to eliminate or minimize exposure to bloodborne pathogens. These controls include items such as: sharps containers, self-sheathing needles, safer medical devices such as needleless systems, etc. Properly handle and dispose of contaminated needles and other sharps immediately. Do not bend, recap, or remove contaminated needles and other sharps unless such an act is required by a specific procedure or has no feasible alternative. There are several other elements to a Bloodborne Pathogen Plan, including an exposure plan. For assistance in developing a Bloodborne Pathogens Program for your office, Utah OSHA's Consultation Program is available to assist you. The Consultation Program is free to small employers in high hazard industries, without citations or penalties. To schedule a visit, please call 801-530-6855.