Silica Program

Silica Awareness

is subject to the OSHA Silica regulations because we have employees. Regardless of whether or not we work in an area that contains Silica hazards, we also have specific responsibilities to protect our employees from Silica hazards which may be present at any site where they work. Exposure to Silica has been shown to cause lung cancer, pulmonary tuberculosis and other airway diseases, including Silicosis, for which there is no cure - prevention to exposure is the best tactic.

Some of our workers may clean-up dust and debris after work that involved disturbance of Silica-containing materials, such masonry materials, concrete, or in some cases even drywall joint compound.

There are many possible locations where employees may be exposed to Silica during their job functions. Silica materials are used in the manufacture of a variety of building materials including masonry block, brick, stone, Silica-cement pipe and sheet, and drywall joint compound. Silica may also be present in concrete.

has responsibilities to take specific actions to protect the health and safety of these workers whenever they are engaged in such activity, even though the work which resulted in the dust and debris was performed by other workers. Our obligations include the following items in all cases.

leadership will assign a competent person which must supervise all jobs involving contact with and clean-up of suspected Silica-containing materials. A competent person is an employee who has received specialized training to identify Silica hazards, to select the best control strategy, and to take prompt action to correct or eliminate problems. The competent person who supervises the work must receive training equivalent to AIHA recommended training for silica competent persons and annual refresher training. Training must focus on the locations of suspect materials, work practices, job assessment, and methods of control - whether engineering control, such ventilation or wet methods must be used to control silica-containing dusts.

All Silica awareness training shall be documented, and the records available to employees, employee's representatives, and site owners where employees are working. Training records shall be kept by and obtained from the company safety officer,

An exposure assessment must be conducted to determine whether or not airborne Silica particles in excess of the Action Level specified in the OSHA Respirable Silica Standard can reasonably be assumed to be present. Air monitoring will be required unless a negative exposure assessment is obtained or objective data shows exposure levels below the action level.

Silica-containing materials can emit airborne particles if the materials are cut, sawed or sanded, or if they are broken during demolition operations. Personal protective equipment such as a dust mask or respirator, and eye protection should be used to control silica exposures.

will provide employees whose work activities may contact Silica containing materials with Silica awareness training initially, Additional training must be provided as often as necessary to ensure that employees know and understand respirable crystalline silica hazards and the protections available in their workplace. The course must cover the health effects of Silica exposure, the hazards of smoking and Silica, use of respirators, locations of Silica materials and signs of their damage, and who to tell and what to do if such materials are dislodged or become non-intact.

Workers who do Silica construction clean-up work must receive annual Silica hazard awareness training. Smoking is not allowed in the work area. Wet methods or wetting agents (unless not feasible) and appropriate work practices must be followed. HEPA vacuums must be used. Prompt clean-up and disposal of debris in leak-proof containers is required.

The following work practices are prohibited: use of high speed abrasive disk sanders without

HEPA filtered exhausts or point-of-cut ventilator, use of compressed air without capture device, dry sweeping/shoveling or other dry clean-up, and employee rotation to circumvent permissible exposure limits.

Signs and labels shall identify the material which is present, its location, and appropriate work practices which, if followed, will ensure that Silica containing material and/or presumed Silica containing material will not be disturbed. The employer shall ensure that employees working in and adjacent to regulated areas comprehend the warning signs.

In addition to these requirements may have additional requirements for finishing tasks depending on whether or not an exposure assessment indicates the likelihood that airborne Silica particle concentrations will be above or below the permissible exposure limits.

Additional Guidance for work where the PEL is likely to be exceeded for workers who sand finished joint compound, painted walls or clean-up any job where the exposure assessment indicates the possibility that airborne Silica particles may exceed the permissible exposure limits of 50 micrograms of respirable crystalline silica per cubic meter (50 μg/m3) at an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA). Periodic exposure monitoring: Employee exposure monitoring (which represents full-shift exposures) must be conducted at the work area to determine accurately the airborne Silica particle concentrations. Monitoring may be discontinued if it shows Silica particle concentrations less than the permissible exposure limits (PELs).

Respirators: Respirators must be selected based upon measured exposure levels and the assigned protection factor of respirators. Negative-pressure air purifying respirators (half-face types) or higher levels are requited. Protective clothing: we must provide appropriate protective work clothing and equipment at no cost to the employee. Decontamination procedures:

Work clothing must be HEPA vacuumed and equipment decontaminated on a plastic drop cloth; if clean-up takes place in a regulated area, the clean-up must comply with the hygiene requited in a higher classification of Silica work.

A regulated area must be established. It must be demarcated in any manner that minimizes the number of persons in the area and protects persons outside the area from exposure to airborne Silica. Signs must be provided and displayed. Medical surveillance is required for all workers doing work who are exposed to Silica above the PELs for 30 or more days per year. The 30-day requirement excludes days in which less than one hour is spent in work when requited work practices are followed. When working on multi-contractor worksites, employees shall be protected from exposure. Employees working immediately adjacent to a Silica job who may be exposed to Silica due to the inadequate containment of such job, shall either remove the employees from the area until the enclosure breach is repaired; or perform an initial exposure assessment.

Our employees may be exposed to Silica hazards under circumstances covered by the OSHA General Industry Silica Standard. Routine housekeeping activities during which employees contact or work in close proximity to Silica particles (say by another's work) is an important example of work covered by the General Industry Standard.

Silica Program will be reviewed by the Safety Officer and Company President at least annually to determine its effectiveness and to adjust to any changes in OSHA standards.

A copy of the written exposure control plan will be available to all employees.

Accurate records of all air monitoring data, objective data and medical surveillance shall be maintained at all times.