

Bulldozer Operator



**U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration Health Hazard Information Sheet HH-44**

Breathing mine air containing harmful levels of respirable coal mine dust causes coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP) and other lung diseases known as "black lung." Mobile surface equipment such as bulldozers presents unique problems in controlling exposure to respirable dust due to the variety of functions they perform. Bulldozers may operate in locations exposed to haulage road dust and downwind of other dust generating equipment like highwall drills, front-end loaders, and off-road haul trucks. These activities, combined with the typical dozer work cycle, (dozing, transporting, and backing) often expose equipment operators to quartz-containing dust produced when removing overburden. We know that exposure to respirable coal mine dust containing quartz particles presenting a significant health risk since quartz dust, which can cause silicosis, is far more toxic to the lungs than coal dust alone.

MSHA has developed this guide to assist miners and mine operators in using all available tools to effectively control respirable coal mine dust levels to **END** black lung. **Act NOW!**

Bulldozer operators should ALWAYS:

- Check to make sure all dust controls on the bulldozer you will be operating, such as enclosed cabs, are in place, in good repair, and operating as required.
- Examine and maintain window and door glass and tight gaskets; and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems as specified by the manufacturer. **Remember:** Repair/replace any damaged, defective or missing components.
- Plug or seal with silicone caulk unused holes, access ports, seams and gaps from interior of cab to the machines' exterior to keep out dust from being blown in by the wind. **Note:** A flashlight can be used to check for gaps, and a smoke bomb released inside the cab will reveal even the smallest leaks.

- Clean or replace air conditioning and recirculation/pressurization filters as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Keep cab doors and windows closed whenever operating the bulldozer. Also, clean-off boots when entering the cab to prevent the cab floor from becoming soiled and contaminating the air in the cab.
- Keep environmental cabs clean inside. Use good housekeeping practices to clean environmental cabs. **Never** use compressed air or dry sweeping.
- Wet down haul roads as required to reduce dust formation/generation due to vehicle traffic.
- Check the operator bimonthly dust sampling results posted on the mine bulletin board.
- Request and use a properly fitted NIOSH-approved respirator when sampling results indicate the presence of excessive dust levels in your work location. (**Remember:** MSHA does not accept respirators as a primary means of dust control.)

--Remember--

Black lung is NOT curable, but it is preventable!

If you have questions about coal mine health matters, please contact your local MSHA office or see the MSHA website at www.msha.gov.