

Respirable Dust Control for Miners and Mine Operators

Health Hazard Information Sheet 41

U.S. Department of Labor
Mine Safety and Health Administration



On this sheet, you will find important information about your right to a healthful workplace guaranteed under *Federal Law* and about the responsibilities of mine operators regarding the control of dust in the mine atmosphere to help prevent occupational lung disease. MSHA is providing this information for miners and mine operators to use as a guide to **Act NOW** and **END** Black Lung.

Miners Have the Right To:

- Breathe air free of harmful levels of respirable coal mine dust.
- Receive training on:
 - *health hazards in their work environment and how to recognize such hazards*
 - *the dust controls that are specified in approved mine ventilation plan*
 - *correct sampling procedures so they may evaluate whether dust levels are being accurately monitored.*
- Proper use and function of all controls specified in the approved ventilation plan during every shift.
- Know the results of the operator's dust sampling, which must be posted on the mine's bulletin board.
- Use properly selected and fitted NIOSH-approved respirators whenever sampling results indicate excessive dust levels in the work environment.
- Request an MSHA inspection when:
 - *excessive dust levels are suspected*
 - *required dust controls are not used or maintained*
 - *the operator's dust sampling is not conducted under typical operating conditions.*

Mine Operator Responsibilities

- Use environmental controls that maintain dust levels at or below permitted levels during every shift.

- Use and properly maintain all dust controls specified in the MSHA-approved ventilation plan on every production shift.
- Perform required on-shift examinations to assure that required dust controls are in place and working properly.
- Conduct respirable dust monitoring under typical operating conditions by:
 - *maintaining sampling equipment as approved, including cleaning and inspecting sampling head assemblies*
 - *strictly following the regulatory requirements for proper collection of dust samples*
 - *sampling bimonthly and submitting the required number of dust samples*
 - *submitting valid samples that reflect typical dust conditions under normal work activities*
 - *not altering, opening, or tampering with dust samples*
 - *posting sampling results on the mine bulletin board for at least 31 days.*
- Maintain an adequate supply and make available to miners NIOSH-approved respirators when sampling results indicate the presence of excessive dust levels in the work environment.
- Report to MSHA any changes in operational status that affect dust sampling within 3 days after the status change has occurred.
- Train miners, at least annually, on:
 - *the health hazards of respirable coal mine dust*
 - *the purpose and importance of effective dust sampling and dust controls*
 - *the mandatory health standards that apply to the particular mining operation*
 - *the health provisions of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act*
 - *the dust control portion of the approved ventilation plan*
 - *the importance of participating in the NIOSH X-ray program.*

--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.