

Tips for Dusty Jobs – Drillers



Health Hazard Information Card HH-35



Drillers and their helpers are exposed to more dust than the typical mine employee. Because mine dust may have silica in it, you should take steps to protect yourself against a possible health hazard.

Silicosis Can Be Deadly

Some dust is stopped by the body's natural defense system, but the smallest dust particles can penetrate deep into the lungs. The harm from dust depends on what it's made of, what size it is, how much you breathe, and how long you breathe it. If you're exposed to enough dust with silica, in time you can get a disease called **silicosis**.

Silicosis can be a disabling, *even fatal*, illness that can't be reversed once a person has it. Lung tissue becomes scarred and inflexible and breathing becomes harder and harder.

**If it's silica ...
it's not just dust.**

Silicosis can't be reversed ... but it can be prevented.

WORKING SMART

- Never drill without a working dust control system.
- If a wet system, don't drill dry!
- Maintain dust controls:
 - Keep drill skirting tight to contain dust.
 - Keep the water tank full.
 - If a dry system, repair all leaks in piping and collector.
 - Adjust equipment for best performance and minimal dust.
- Compressed air is NOT for cleaning clothes or equipment.
- Work upwind of dust clouds or dusty areas.
- Place cab upwind of the drilling.
- Report any maintenance or system problems right away.

THE CAB

- Use a heater and an air conditioner with a HEPA* filter.
- Keep doors and windows closed for positive pressurizing.
- Check that seals are pliable and intact.
- Clean the cab every day.

RESPIRATORS MUST BE...

- The right type and worn right.
- Clean.
- Worn – not hung on your neck or on top of your hat.
- The right fit to stop dust from getting into your lungs.
- A good fit – Beards prevent it.

*** High Efficiency Particulate Air**

(always maintain the HEPA filter according to manufacturer's instructions)

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