

# Tips for Dusty Jobs - Laborers



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## Health Hazard Information Card HH-37

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### Cleanup Work and Dust

Maintenance, cleanup and utility workers 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 are 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

- **Don't dry sweep** – It puts dust in the air where you can breathe it.
- **Compressed air is NOT for cleaning** clothes or equipment.
- **Keep work area clean** – Don't let dust build up.
- **Use water** or a **vacuum** system with a remotely located exhaust or a HEPA\* filter.
- **Report any maintenance or system problems** right away.
- When possible, **maintain and clean** equipment when it's not operating.
- Clean equipment and work areas **before** and after doing maintenance.
- **Work upwind** of dust clouds or dusty areas.

## 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)