

Fact Sheet

Medical Surveillance Requirements for Metal and Nonmetal Mine Operators



Under Title 30 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) § 60.15, metal and nonmetal (MNM) mine operators are required to provide each miner periodic medical examinations performed by a health care professional, at no cost to the miner. This requirement is to promote protective measures, early detection, and prevention of respiratory and other illnesses caused by silica dust and to safeguard miners' health.

Who can perform medical examinations?

- Physician or other licensed health care professional (PLHCP) (e.g., a registered nurse) – a health care professional legally permitted to provide the required medical examinations; or
- Specialist – an American board-certified specialist in pulmonary disease or occupational medicine



What must be included in these medical examinations?

- Medical and work history, with special emphasis on respiratory health:
 - Past and present exposure to respirable crystalline silica and dust
 - Any history of tuberculosis
 - Other relevant information
- Physical examination with special emphasis on the respiratory system
- Chest X-ray
 - Single posteroanterior view at full inspiration
 - Evaluated (classified) by a B Reader certified by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) using the International Labour Office (ILO) classification system
- Spirometry (a type of pulmonary function test) to measure forced vital capacity (FVC), forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV1), and FEV1/FVC ratio that is administered by:
 - A spirometry technician certified by a NIOSH-approved Spirometry Program Sponsor; or
 - A pulmonary function technologist with a credential from the National Board for Respiratory Care



How often must medical examinations be conducted?

Operators must provide medical examinations to miners **hired on or after April 8, 2026** who are **new to the mining industry**:

- Initial medical examination within 60 days of beginning employment
- Follow-up medical examination no later than 3 years after the initial examination

- If evidence of pneumoconiosis or decreased lung function is determined during the follow-up examination, miners must be provided with an opportunity to have an additional follow-up examination by a specialist no later than 2 years after the follow-up
- Subsequent medical examinations must be offered at least once every 5 years after completion of the follow-up examinations

Starting on April 8, 2026, MNM mine operators must provide **all** employed **miners** (who are not new to the mining industry, regardless of the hiring dates) with opportunities to have examinations:

- Within 12 months after the compliance date of April 8, 2026
- Subsequently at least once every 5 years
 - Examinations must be made available to miners for a period of at least 6 months beginning no less than 3.5 and not more than 4.5 years after the last 6-month period during which the previous medical exams were offered

What documentation is required from medical examinations?

Within **30 days** of the medical examination, mine operators must ensure that **the PLHCP or specialist provides:**

- Medical examination and test results **to the miner** and, at the request of the miner, to the miner's designated physician or designee
- Results of chest X-ray classifications **to NIOSH** once NIOSH establishes a reporting system.
- Written medical opinion about the miner's health status **to the operator**, limited to:
 - Date of the medical examination
 - Statement that the medical examination has met the requirements in 30 CFR 60.15
 - Any recommended limitations on the miner's use of a respirator

How long must mine operators keep medical examination records?

Mine operators must keep written medical opinions from the PLHCP or specialist for the duration of **each miner's employment plus 6 months**.

For further assistance, check the MSHA website or contact your MSHA District Office.

Medical Surveillance Check List

For Metal and Nonmetal Mine Operators



MSHA's respirable crystalline silica rule has a requirement under Title 30 Section 60.15 for metal and nonmetal mine operators to provide periodic medical examinations to miners at no cost. These examinations must be conducted by a physician or other licensed healthcare professional (PLHCP) or specialist who is American Board-Certified in pulmonary diseases or occupational medicine to ensure the safety and well-being of miners.

Tips and tools to assist operators with finding a PLHCP or specialist:

- Conduct a search of your city and state using the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine search engine.
 - <https://acoem.org/acoem-find-a-provider>
- Speak with your health insurance provider for a referral.
- Conduct a web search for a PLHCP or specialist in your city and state.
 - Use keywords such as: workplace health, occupational health, or internal medicine services.
- Conduct a search for a health care provider using the MSHA Health Locator Tool.
 - <https://www.msha.gov/safety-health/msha-health-locator-tool>
 - Select "Health Center."
- Conduct a search for a health care provider using the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Approved Health Facility Search & Map.
 - <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/niosh-rhd/cwhsp/FacilityMap.aspx>
- Conduct a search of your city and state using the WebMD Care® search engine.
 - <https://doctor.webmd.com/providers/specialty>
 - Select Internal Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Public Health & General Preventive Medicine, or Pulmonology.

As a mine operator, it is important for you to ensure PLHCPs or specialists are the right fit for evaluating respirable crystalline silica health hazards associated with your mining operation.

This checklist is intended to guide you in selecting a suitable PLHCP or specialist. Please note that metal and nonmetal operators **are not** required to select a NIOSH-approved facility. A yes/no response may require follow-up questions to clarify the qualifications of the PLHCP or specialist.

For further assistance, check the MSHA website or contact your MSHA District Office.

Question	Yes	No	Notes
Is the PLHCP you are considering licensed and legally permitted to provide the required medical examinations?			
Is the specialist you are considering American Board-Certified in pulmonary disease or occupational medicine?			
Is the PLHCP or specialist thoroughly familiar with the health hazards associated with respirable crystalline silica, dust, and other agents affecting the respiratory system?			
Is the PLHCP or specialist able to accommodate the number of miners under your employment?			
Is the PLHCP or specialist conveniently located near the work site, ensuring easy access for the miners?			
Does the PLHCP or specialist offer business hours that are convenient for the miners?			
Is the PLHCP or specialist able to conduct a pulmonary function test* on the office site?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If yes, does the PLHCP employ a spirometry technician with a current certificate from a NIOSH-approved Spirometry Program Sponsor or a pulmonary function technologist with a current National Board for Respiratory Care credential? 			
Does the PLHCP or specialist offer on-site chest X-rays?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ If no, is the PLHCP or specialist associated with a diagnostic facility nearby that can provide chest X-rays? 			
Will the PLHCP arrange for X-rays to be classified according to the International Labour Office (ILO) International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconiosis by a NIOSH-certified B Reader?			
Can the PLHCP or specialist provide results of the examination or tests to the miner or miner's designated physician (or another designee identified by miner) within 30 days of the medical examination?			
Can the PLHCP or specialist agree to deliver the results of the chest X-ray classifications to NIOSH within 30 days via an online system established by NIOSH?			
<p>Can the PLHCP or specialist provide a written medical opinion, free of any medical information, to the mine operator within 30 days of the medical examination that is limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The date of the medical examination; ■ A statement that the examination has met the requirements of 30 CFR 60.15(e); and ■ Any recommended limitations on the miner's use of a respirator. ** 			

*Note: The pulmonary function test is called spirometry and includes forced vital capacity (FVC), forced expiratory volume in one second (FEV₁), and the FEV₁/FVC ratio.

Note: The operator **will not receive any additional medical information.