



OSHA'S REVISED SILICA STANDARDS

The new requirements for OSHA's revised silica standards have been implemented for private industry employers. At this time the public sector has not adopted these regulations, but recommends that employers become familiar with the new requirements and consider planning for the future adoption of these standards.

Depending on the scope of their activities, OSHA's Construction and General Industry Silica Standards may apply to public highway departments, maintenance shops or parks departments. The following information summarizes the Construction Standard, [29 CFR 1926.1153](#). Employers are encouraged to also review the General Industry Standard, [29 CFR 1910.1053](#).

Most public sector employers are familiar with OSHA's general industry standards. However, OSHA's construction standards apply to public sector employers whenever a public sector employee performs construction, alteration, and/or repair activities, including some painting and decorating activities.

Under OSHA's revised silica standard for construction employers are required to:

- Communicate hazards and train employees;
- Where feasible, restrict housekeeping practices that expose employees to respirable silica;
- Establish and implement a written exposure control plan, which includes a designated competent person;
- Provide respiratory protection when required;
- Offer medical exams to employees who are required to wear a respirator for 30 or more days a year;
- Keep records of medical examination

The revised standard provides two options for employers to limit employee exposure:

- Follow the specific job task control methods found in [Table 1](#) of the standard, or
- Use alternate control measures which keep employee exposures below $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ as an 8-hour time weighted average

[Table 1](#) contains common construction tasks with "approved" dust control methods and required respiratory protection. Employers who correctly follow [Table 1](#) are not required to measure workers' exposure to silica and are not subject to the permissible exposure limit. However, employers who follow [Table 1](#) are still required to perform the six tasks listed above, beginning with "Communicate hazards and train employees".

[OSHA's Silica, Crystalline Safety and Health Topics Page](#) contains many helpful resources including a [Small Entity Compliance Guide for Construction](#) and one for [General Industry and Maritime](#). These documents provide examples of work activities and explanations of the requirements that apply as well as examples of work activities where the standard may not apply. Videos, fact sheets, a sample training presentation and other materials are also available on this [Health and Safety Topics Page](#).

DSPS has also created some resources for public sector employers, which can be found on our [DSPS Public Sector Employee Safety Program](#) web page under [Publications](#).