EMPLOYEE INFORMATION AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA
“The standard requires employers to ensure that each employee who is covered by the silica standard can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the health hazards associated with exposure to silica” 29 C.F.R. § 1926.1153(i)(2)(i).
TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

The employer must ensure that employees trained under the silica standard can demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
- Health hazards associated RCS exposure.
- Specific workplace tasks that could expose employees to RCS.
- Specific measures the employer is implementing to protect employees from RCS exposure.
- The contents of the RCS standard.
- The identity of the competent person designated by the employer.
- The purpose and a description of the medical surveillance program.

Employers must train employees on workplace-specific:
- Engineering controls
- Work practice controls
- Respiratory protection
DOES THE STANDARD REQUIRE CLASSROOM TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES?

- The standard **DOES NOT** require classroom training for employers.
- The standard **DOES NOT** specify how an employer needs to train employees.
- The standard allows the employer to determine how training can be most effective and accomplished.

**Examples of acceptable forms of training:**

- Hands-on training
- Video
- Slide presentations
- Classroom instruction
- Written Material
- Informal discussions during safety meetings
- Any combination of these methods above.

*To ensure that employees comprehend the material presented, it is important to allow employees to ask questions and receive answers if they do not comprehend the material during or after training.*
HOW CAN EMPLOYEES DEMONSTRATE KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE SILICA STANDARD?

- According to the standard, there is NO set method employers must use to ensure employees demonstrate knowledge and understanding.

- The standard defines employers’ training obligations in terms of performance-oriented objectives meant to ensure that employees are aware of the hazards associated with silica.

- The requirement for training is performance-oriented in order to allow flexibility for employers to provide training as needed to ensure that each employee can demonstrate the knowledge and understanding required under the rule.

Employers can determine whether employees have the requisite knowledge through methods such as:

- Required training subjects
- Written tests
- Oral quizzes
WHEN DO YOU TRAIN EMPLOYEES?

- Employees must be trained at the time they are assigned to a position involving exposure to respirable crystalline silica.
- When the employer asks an employee to perform a task that is new to that employee.
- When the employer introduces new protections.
- When an employee is working in a manner that suggests he or she has forgotten what was learned in training.
ADDITIONAL TRAININGS

Hazard Communication Program:
The hazard communication standard applies to hazardous chemicals (including respirable crystalline silica) regardless of the airborne exposure level.

Respiratory Protection Program:
If respirators are used in your workplace, you must also receive the training required under the respiratory protection standard.
HAZARD COMMUNICATION STANDARD

Employers must comply with OSHA’s Hazard Communication standard (HCS):

- HCS requires employers to inform employees about hazardous chemicals in the workplace, such as respirable crystalline silica, through their written hazard communication programs.

- Written hazard communication programs must describe how requirements for container labels, safety data sheets (SDSs), and employee training will be met.

- As part of their hazard communication program for respirable crystalline silica, employers must address at least these health hazards: cancer, lung effects, immune system effects, and kidney effects.
RESPIRATORS

- The use of respirators is needed when engineering controls and work practices are not enough to safely control exposures levels of silica.

- Even when respirators must be used, the employer must still use engineering and work practice controls to lower exposures as much as possible.

- Respirators are only effective if they are properly selected, fitted, maintained, and worn.

- It is important to provide training to employees on how to properly use respirators.

- PPE should be used as a last resort.
WHEN ARE RESPIRATORS REQUIRED?

- Respirators are required during Table-1 tasks that require respirator use.
- When the exposure to RCS exceeds, or is expected to exceed, the PEL.
- Where an exposure assessment has not been documented.
- If an employee is required to wear a respirator at any time during a work shift, this counts as one day toward the 30-day requirement.
WHAT RESPIRATORS CAN BE USED FOR SILICA?

- All NIOSH tested and certified particulate or supplied-air respirators may be used for silica protection.
- The 95-, 99- and 100-efficiency filters can be used.
- Filtering face piece respirators can also be used.
- High Efficiency (HE) powered-air respirators.
SOURCES

- OSHA Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for construction (PDF) [Source](https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/silicacrystalline/construction_info_silica.html)
- OSHA Respirable Crystalline Silica in Construction Workplaces: Sample Employee Training Presentation. [Source](https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/silicacrystalline/silica_sample_employee_training_powerpoint_osha.pptx)