TOOLBOX TALK

Silica Dust

Topic	Silica Dust	Attendees	0

WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT

When you cut, grind or drill concrete, brick, tile or stone, you make a fine dust you cannot see that goes deep into your lungs. Breathing it causes silicosis, lung cancer and kidney disease, and the damage cannot be undone. The dust that hurts you is the dust you cannot see, so we control it every time.

1. Silica is in concrete, bricks, pavers, tiles, mortar, render, natural stone and engineered stone.
2. Engineered stone has very high silica content and is especially dangerous to cut.
3. OSHA's limit is 50 micrograms per cubic meter over 8 hours. That is a tiny amount: a pinch of fine dust spread through a room can be enough to go over it.
4. Follow the controls OSHA's Table 1 lists for your task and tool, such as water fed to the blade on a handheld saw. If you are not following Table 1, exposure has to be measured.
5. Control dust at the source: use water suppression or on-tool extraction connected to the right class vacuum every time you cut.
6. Check the extraction is working before you start: hose connected, filter clean, bag not full and the flow alarm not going off.
7. Keep the water running on wet cutters. A dry blade on a wet saw makes as much dust as a dry saw.
8. Wear the respirator Table 1 lists for the task: APF 10 (a fit-tested N95 or half mask) for most tasks, APF 25 (such as a PAPR) for tuckpointing over 4 hours.
9. Tight fitting masks need a fit test and a clean shave. Stubble breaks the seal.
10. Never dry sweep or blow dust off with compressed air. Use a vacuum or wet clean up.
11. Cut in the open or away from others, and keep people out of the dust cloud.
12. Change out of dusty clothes before you go home, and wash hands and face before eating.
13. If you wear a respirator for silica 30 or more days a year, your employer must offer you a medical exam. Take it.
14. Silicosis can show up years after the work, and early on you feel fine. By the time you are short of breath, the damage is done.

QUESTIONS FOR THE CREW

1. Which materials on this job contain silica?
2. What dust controls are on the tools we are using today?
3. When were you last fit tested for your mask?
4. How should we clean up the dust at the end of the day?
5. Who else is working near our cutting today, and how do we keep them out of the dust?

Reference: 29 CFR 1926.1153 (Respirable crystalline silica)

RUN BY

	Name	Signature	Date	
Presenter				

ATTENDANCE

Name	Role / company	Signature	Date

Name	Role / company	Signature	Date

Keep this record for at least 1 year (WA requires 1 year; CA requires meetings at least every 10 working days).