# Toolbox TALK

## SILICA CONCERNS AND PRECAUTIONS

Silica is found in many materials that are common on construction sites, including sand, concrete, rock, mortar, and brick. When workers cut, grind, abrasive blast, jackhammer, or perform other tasks that disturb these materials, dust containing crystalline silica can be released into the air. Workers who inhale this dust are at risk of serious, sometimes fatal illnesses including a lung disease called silicosis, lung cancer, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Silica inhalation can also cause other illnesses such as kidney disease.

Preventing Silica-Related Health Problems

- Use vacuums or water to reduce or eliminate silica dust at the source, before it becomes airborne. When these controls are not enough, use respiratory protection. Routinely maintain dust control systems to keep them in good working order.
- Do not use sand or other substances containing more than one percent crystalline silica as abrasive blasting materials. Substitute less hazardous materials.
- Wear disposable or washable work clothes, and shower if facilities are available. Vacuum the dust from your clothes, and change into clean clothing before leaving the work site. Do not brush or blow the dust off, and do not bring dust home.
- Avoid eating, drinking, and smoking in areas where silica dust is present. Wash your hands and face outside of dusty areas before performing any of these activities.

Remember: If it's silica, it's not just dust.

**Date:**

**ATTENDANCE RECORD**

**SUPERVISOR:**

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**CREW MEMBERS PRESENT:**

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**COMMENTS/FEEDBACK:**

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