A screen shot of a computer

Description automatically generatedSilica safety talk

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| |  | | --- | | Workers who inhale very small crystalline silica particles are at increased risk of developing serious silica-related diseases. These tiny particles (known as "respirable" particles) can penetrate deep into workers' lungs and cause silicosis, an incurable and sometimes fatal lung disease. Crystalline silica exposure also puts workers at risk for developing lung cancer, other potentially debilitating respiratory diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and kidney disease.  The written exposure control plan is a tool to systematically approach the ways that employers are protecting their workers from overexposure to silica dust hazards. The plan lays out how a team will implement protective measures and ensure the proper functioning of engineering controls and work practices that can prevent overexposures from occurring. OSHA expects a written exposure control plan will be instrumental in ensuring that employers comprehensively and consistently protect their employees.  Your written exposure control plan is the list of everything you are doing on site to protect workers from silica dust and must contain, at minimum, the following four elements.   1. A description of the tasks in the workplace that involve exposure to respirable crystalline silica. 2. A description of the engineering controls, work practices, and respiratory protection used to limit employee exposure to respirable crystalline silica for each task. 3. A description of the housekeeping measures used to limit employee exposure to respirable crystalline silica. 4. A description of the procedures used to restrict access to work areas, when necessary, to minimize the number of employees exposed to respirable crystalline silica and their level of exposure, including exposures generated by other employers or sole proprietors.   Employers shall review and evaluate the effectiveness of the written exposure control plan at least annually and update, as necessary. In some cases, the plan may change from one project to the next depending on how the tasks and the conditions differ.  The employer shall also designate a competent person to make frequent and regular inspections of job sites, materials, and equipment to implement the written exposure control plan.  The written exposure control plan is an important and mandatory part of keeping workers protected from silica dust hazards. In addition to creating and maintain the written plan, employers must ensure that all individuals who may be exposed to hazards of silica dust through their work tasks receive training to provide knowledge on the topic of silica dust. | |