

THINGS TO KNOW:

- The purpose of the OSHA standard is to protect workers from respirable crystalline silica
- OSHA estimates there are 2 million construction workers exposed to respirable crystalline silica
- Exposure to respirable crystalline silica can cause silicosis, lung cancer, other respiratory diseases and kidney disease.
- OSHA has mandated that as of September 23rd 2017 those workers involved with concrete construction and crystalline silica dust exposure undergo a respiratory exam to assess the current level of crystalline silica exposure and to set a baseline for ongoing medical surveillance
- Employees should be tested initially and then every 3 years to establish any ongoing exposure levels
- OSHA has a required list of tests that must be performed in order to adequately assess the respiratory system.
- Additional testing may also be requested by the physician or provider should any health risks or concerns be noted during the initial baseline examination and testing

THE RESPIRABLE CRYSTALLINE SILICA STANDARD REQUIRES THE FOLLOWING:

- **Medical History:** Required annually. A medical and work history, with emphasis on: Past, present, and anticipated exposure to respirable crystalline silica, dust, and other agents affecting the respiratory system; any history of respiratory system dysfunction, including signs and symptoms of respiratory disease (e.g., shortness of breath, cough, wheezing); history of TB; and history of current or former tobacco use. This will be reviewed by the examiner with the employee at the time of the exam.
- **TB Testing:** Required annually. One Step TB testing (Mantoux Skin Test). The physician or provider may perform periodic (e.g., annual) TB testing as appropriate, based on employees' risk factors. Employees with positive TB tests and those with indeterminate test results will need to undergo further evaluation including referral to a specialist, depending on the test results and clinical picture.
- **Physical Examination:** Required every 3 years. A physical examination, with special emphasis on the respiratory system, performed by the physician or provider. The physical examination must be performed at the initial examination and every three years thereafter.
- **Chest X-ray:** Required every 3 years. A single posteroanterior (PA) radiograph of the chest at full inspiration is required to be performed on the initial examination and every three years thereafter. The chest x-ray must be interpreted and classified according to the International Labour Office (ILO) International Classification of Radiographs of Pneumoconioses by a NIOSH certified B Reader.
- **Pulmonary Function Testing:** Required every 3 years. Pulmonary function testing must be performed on the initial examination and every three years thereafter. The required pulmonary function test must be administered by a spirometry technician with a current certificate from a National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH)-approved spirometry course. The test results will be interpreted by a physician provider experienced in pulmonary function test interpretation.

Due to COVID-19 precautions, please call Baptist Occupational Health for specific pulmonary function pre-testing requirements.

- Additional recommended testing may include Respirator Fit Testing, which consists of testing the employee's mask fit to ensure a proper fit when used during crystalline silica exposure. The preferred method for this is the Quantitative Fit Test which is more effective than a qualitative fit test in ensuring a fully sealed mask along the facial structures and contours. The provider may also order additional testing or lab work depending on any worker health condition or finding noted during the examination.

Baptist Occupational Health offers all of the requirements of the OSHA Silica standard as outlined in the 2017 mandate in addition to Respirator Fit testing at the Baptist Medical Park – Nine Mile location.

For additional details or questions, please call Lee Irving, Program Developer at Baptist Health, at 850.723.8401 or 850.208.6424.

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