

Snapshots!

**Respirable Crystalline Silica**

<https://ehs.psu.edu/Respirable-Crystalline-Silica/Overview>

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**Who does this program apply to?**

* Penn State University employees, student employees, contractors, and visiting academic personnel performing work with or disturbing respirable crystalline silica (RCS)-containing materials or products, whether in construction, maintenance, laboratory/academic, or other settings.
* The Respirable Crystalline Silica (Silica) program applies to all RCS exposure except traditional Agriculture, and addresses requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) silica standards found at [29 CFR 1926.1153](https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=1270) (Construction), and [29 CFR 1910.1053](https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=STANDARDS&p_id=1282) (General Industry).

**What are the key points of this program?**

* **Penn State requires an internal review process for determining workplace exposure to RCS, and to limit workplace exposure levels to the OSHA Action Level (AL) of 25 micrograms per cubic meter air, as an eight-hour work shift average (TWA8).**
* **Penn State does not anticipate employee exposure levels to exceed the OSHA Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) of 50 micrograms per cubic meter air-TWA8. Any work involving such exposures is currently anticipated to be conducted by contractors. Such exposure levels require OSHA administrative measures.**
* **A** [written exposure control plan](https://ehs.psu.edu/sites/ehs/files/penn_state_written_silica_exposure_control_plan.docx) **in accordance with the OSHA standards is required for all job tasks-operations with exposures which may equal or exceed the OSHA AL. This describes the listed tasks, controls, respirators, and housekeeping measures necessary to limit RCS exposure.**
* **Medical surveillance and respirator use are necessary wherever exposures may exceed the OSHA AL for 30 or more days per year; medical surveillance is otherwise required where respirator use is required. Respirator use is also required for construction tasks, as outlined at** [29 CFR 1926.1153 Table 1](https://ehs.psu.edu/sites/ehs/files/osha_fr_silica_construction_1926.1153_-_excerpt_table_1.docx)**, wherever exposure evaluations are opted not to be completed. Refer to the Penn State Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) for all other requirements associated with respirator use.**
* **Training (On-line) for affected employees at Cornerstone/Skillsoft; plus applicable job-specific training.**
* **Managers and Supervisors** must:
  + Know RCS program requirements and ensure employees are properly trained and medically-cleared.
  + Ensure necessary equipment, controls, respirators, and housekeeping measures are available and used, as part of the location written exposure control plan, where applicable,
  + Ensure site compliance with program requirements, and assist EHS in periodic program evaluation.
* **Employees** must:
  + Participate in and comply with program requirements, and notify supervisors, safety representatives, and EHS of new or potential exposures.
* EHS and Safety Officers/Representatives must:

Establish and/or implement policy, procedure, program requirements, and written exposure control plans to ensure OSHA compliance, provide guidance, and periodically review and update the RCS program.

**For additional information:**

* **OSHA Safety & Health Topics - Silica** 
  + <https://www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/silicacrystalline/index.html>
* [**Penn State EHS Respirable Crystalline Silica (Silica) Program**](https://ehs.psu.edu/sites/ehs/files/ps_ehs_silica_program_5-3-2018_fd.docx)