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October 3, 2016

SCI Safety News: Drug Positivity in U.S. Workforce Rises to Highest Level in a Decade (Part 1)

Source: www.ehs.com

By: Sandy Smith

Date: September 16, 2016



Following years of declines, the percentage of employees in the combined U.S. workforce testing positive for drugs has steadily increased over the last three years to a 10-year high, according to an analysis of nearly 11 million workforce drug test results by Quest Diagnostics.

The [Quest Diagnostics Drug Testing Index™](#) examines illicit drug use by America's workforce based on an analysis of de-identified results of more than 9.5 million urine, 900,000 oral fluid and 200,000 hair laboratory-based tests performed nationally by the company for employers in 2015. The findings were unveiled at the [Substance Abuse Program Administrators Association \(SAPAA\)](#) annual conference.

“Our nationally representative analysis clearly shows that drug use by the American workforce is on the rise, and this trend extends to several different classes of drugs and categories of drug tests,” said Barry Sample, Ph.D., senior director, science and technology, Quest Diagnostics Employer Solutions. “The 2015 findings related to post-accident testing results should also be of concern to employers, especially those with safety-sensitive employees.”

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James Lehrke-SCI

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SCI OSHA Update: SLC 2016: Compliance and OSHA’s Respirable Crystalline Silica Rule

Source: <http://ehstoday.com>

By: Stefanie Valentic

Date: September 30, 2016

While the respirable silica rule isn’t in effect until June 23, 2017 for the construction industry, safety professionals are questioning whether they will be able to stay compliant.

Tressi Cordaro, principal at Jackson Lewis P.C., gave Safety Leadership Conference attendees a road map to its respirable crystalline silica rule and answered some of those questions. “It’s just about everywhere, and trying to regulate it is problematic,” Cordaro said. “The question is can employers feasibly do what OSHA is asking them to do?”



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Quick Tips for Healthy Living

Sitting too much may raise heart disease risk

By AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION NEWS

The old adage “move it or lose it” doesn’t only apply to couch potatoes. Even people who exercise regularly could be at increased risk for heart disease and stroke if they spend lots of time sitting, according to a [science advisory](#) from the American Heart Association.

“We spend a lot more time sitting behind computers than we used to. Movement is being engineered out of our lives, and the best advice is that we need to sit less and move more,” said Deborah Rohm Young, Ph.D., chair of the panel that wrote the new advisory published in the American Heart Association journal *Circulation*.

Young, the director of behavioral research at Kaiser Permanente Southern California, teamed up with a panel of experts to look closely at the best research on sedentary behavior. The authors concluded that prolonged sedentary time can be bad for your heart and blood vessels regardless of how much physical activity you get.

“If you’re already physically active, that’s the most important thing. But it’s good to take breaks from sedentary time, too,” Young said. “Instead of powering through your work from the minute you get into the office until lunch break, consider walking around the office a couple of times.”

The statement said evidence suggests too much sedentary time increases the risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and death. Sedentary time is rising, with U.S. adults now spending an estimated six to eight hours a day engaged in sedentary behavior, which includes sitting, driving, reading, TV viewing, screen time and computer use, according to the advisory.

Marc Hamilton, Ph.D., author of several studies on sedentary behavior and a professor at the University of Houston, states, “I like to remind people that 30 minutes a day of exercise can’t immunize you from what you do the other 23-and-a-half hours.”

“Our bodies were built to move all day. They weren’t built to be idle and stationary with a metabolic rate similar to a person in a coma,” Hamilton said. “When we’re depriving ourselves of that kind of essential muscular activity throughout the day, very potent things happen inside our bodies. You can’t impact those same cellular processes by going to a gym and doing artificial exercises for 30 minutes.”

The statement also noted that certain smartphone apps might be an effective way to get people up and moving. “The use of technology to reduce sedentary behaviors requires further study, but appears promising,” the statement said.

Doctors can also help the cause, Young said, by gently nudging people to spend less time planted on the sofa or in front of the computer.

Information source: <http://news.heart.org/sitting-too-much-may-raise-heart-disease-risk/>

The key provisions of the rule are:

- Reduces the permissible exposure limit (PEL) for respirable crystalline silica to 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air, averaged over an 8-hour shift.
- Requires employers to: use engineering controls (such as water or ventilation) to limit worker exposure to the PEL; provide respirators when engineering controls cannot adequately limit exposure; limit worker access to high exposure areas; develop a written exposure control plan, offer medical exams to highly exposed workers, and train workers on silica risks and how to limit exposures.
- Provides medical exams to monitor highly exposed workers and gives them information about their lung health.
- Provides flexibility to help employers — especially small businesses — protect workers from silica exposure.

There are two ways to comply with the standard: comply with Table 1 of the rule which details engineering and work practice control methods and the required respiratory protection and minimum assigned protection factor or regular exposure assessments, she said. The issue with the new rule is availability of sampling pumps and certified industrial hygiene professionals for exposure assessment. The supply just is not able to fit the demand, Cordaro said.

“The agency likes to force technology into compliance,” she said. In addition, the required competent person will have a large task on their hands. Because of the ever-changing dynamics of construction sites, the appointed person will have to do frequent and regular inspections of the job site, materials and equipment and work those into the written exposure control plan, Cordaro said.

“The agency believes this person is going to be the key to preventing overexposure,” she told attendees. Lastly, required medical exams could come at “extensive costs” to the employer.

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