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Weekly Safety Tip

Life Is All About Choices!®

November 14, 2016

SCI Safety Tip: OSHA IN THE NEWS – NEW SILICA RULE

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OSHA's new silica rule aims to keep dust down but raises many questions

Respirable crystalline silica rule effective June 23, 2016

By Chris Woelfel, TileLetter contributor

OSHA[®]
The

new federal rules limiting the amount of allowable silica dust exposure for workers is raising questions about how particle amounts will be measured, the efficacy of recommended

SCI Safety Slogan

Wishing You and Your Family a Safe and Happy Thanksgiving Holiday

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methods to reduce exposure, and the financial impact of the ruling on small businesses. For tile and stone installers, OSHA’s new rules are presenting mandates for planning, measuring, and reporting that many are calling impractical and an undue burden on workers and their employers.

No one disputes the need and desire to keep workers safe. The construction trades and dozens of lawmakers, however, are questioning why OSHA didn’t simply enforce existing rules rather than issue a new set of complicated and unattainable regulations.

Fearing that the new rules will put companies out of business while resulting in no increase in worker safety, 23 national construction industry trade associations are challenging OSHA’s final respirable crystalline silica rule in the U.S. Court of Appeals. Jim Hieb, the Marble Institute of America’s (MIA) CEO, says the rule is simply flawed. “We have significant concerns about whether OSHA’s rule is even technically feasible, particularly OSHA’s final permissible exposure limit.” The new rules cut the exposure limit from 100ug/m3 to 50ug/m3 and create an “actionable” limit of 25ug/m3 that then kicks in a number of medical screening provisions. “We question whether OSHA truly understands the unique challenges facing the construction industry with respect to controlling silica exposure,” he explained. “We also believe that OSHA’s final cost estimates for the rule are still significantly underestimated.”

Measuring airborne silica is a foundational requirement under part of the new rules. The National Tile Contractors Association (NTCA) supported OSHA’s previous silica rules, but executive director Bart Bettiga told the agency that dust control, especially at the low exposure levels that OSHA is recommending, is complex and challenging. “It is universally recognized that the current methods for sampling and analyzing respirable crystalline silica are not exact, and are subject to variation and error that can cause false positives and negatives,” Bettiga said.

Mortar and grout mixing: silica exposure risk for tile installers

The American Lung Association describes silicosis as “a lung disease caused by breathing in tiny bits of silica, a mineral that is part of sand, rock, and mineral ores such as quartz. It mostly affects workers in mining, glass manufacturing, and foundry work. Over time, exposure to silica particles causes scarring in the lungs, which can harm your ability to breathe.”





Quick Tips for Healthy Living

HAPPY healthy THANKSGIVING

Thanksgiving is the one of a few days each year where holiday eating can spiral out of control and your healthy diet is forgotten. From the vast array of delectable foods and desserts offered during the holidays to the huge amount of food so often available, it can be difficult to remember healthy habits with a giant turkey sitting in front of you, flanked by huge bowls of stuffing and bread. Holiday eating does not have to be a disaster for your diet. You can enjoy the food of the holiday and still stay within the confines of a healthy diet by adopting the following tips.

1. Participate in a local Run/Walk on Thanksgiving Day

One of the most popular days of the year for organized runs is Thanksgiving Day, and "Turkey Trots" are held nationwide in hundreds of cities and towns. Generally run early in the morning, Turkey Trots are usually a 5K (3.1 mile) run, with some larger gatherings offering 1K walks, kids fun runs, or 10K (6.2 mile) distance runs. In addition to warding off some of the extra calories you may consume through holiday eating, joining a Turkey Trot can also serve as a fun group activity for the family, because the events are family-friendly and allow all ages to participate.

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HAPPY healthy THANKSGIVING continued.....

2. Create Healthy Sides - Sometimes it's easy to get carried away with delicious sides such as stuffing, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes, and gravy and forget that turkey even exists. Its doubtful many dieters can keep from trying some of everything on the table, but sides don't need to be caloric catastrophes, despite traditions. It's easy to come up with sides that can add flavor to your holiday eating without breaking your diet in half. For example, you can serve roasted sweet potatoes instead of traditional mashed potatoes or mash steamed cauliflower for a nonstarchy option.

3. Eat Breakfast - Since Thanksgiving dinner is often eaten in the afternoon, it's common to forget about breakfast since the threat of a giant meal rests on the horizon. But as anyone who's tried to eat sensibly knows, starving yourself now will just have you eating much more, later. To combat the urge to fill your Thanksgiving plate over and over again, make sure to eat breakfast that morning. In addition to keeping your Thanksgiving feast binge-free, eating breakfast will keep your energy level high especially if you're responsible for getting dinner to the table. Many people wake in the early morning hours to start cooking for Thanksgiving, toiling away in the kitchen can be made doubly hard if you've not eaten. Choose a sensible breakfast so you're not too ravenous by the time the turkey hits the table.

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