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## *Weekly Safety Tip*

*Life Is All About Choices!*<sup>®</sup>

November 7, 2016

### SCI Safety Tip: Skin Exposures & Effects

Source: <http://www.cdc.org>

Date: July 2, 2013



It is estimated that more than 13 million workers in the United States are potentially exposed to chemicals that can be absorbed through the skin. Dermal exposure to hazardous agents can result in a variety of occupational diseases and disorders, including occupational skin diseases (OSD) and systemic toxicity. Historically, efforts to control workplace exposures to hazardous agents have focused on inhalation rather than skin exposures. As a result, assessment strategies and methods are well developed for evaluating inhalation exposures in the workplace; standardized methods are currently lacking for measuring and assessing skin exposures.

OSD are the second most common type of occupational disease and can occur in several different forms including:

- Irritant contact dermatitis,
- Allergic contact dermatitis,
- Skin cancers,
- Skin infections,
- Skin injuries, and
- Other miscellaneous skin diseases.

Contact dermatitis is one of the most common types of occupational illness, with estimated annual costs exceeding \$1 billion.

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Workers at risk of potentially harmful exposures of the skin include, but are not limited to, those working in the following industries and sectors:

- Food service
- Cosmetology
- Health care
- Agriculture
- Cleaning
- Painting
- Mechanics
- Printing/lithography
- Construction

**Anatomy and Functions of the Skin**

The skin is the body’s largest organ, accounting for more than 10 percent of body mass. The skin provides a number of functions including:

- protection,
- water preservation,
- shock absorption,
- tactile sensation,
- calorie reservation,
- vitamin D synthesis,
- temperature control, and
- lubrication and waterproofing.

*Learn more about the effects of OSD’s next week*

# SCI OSHA Compliance: OSHA's Final Rule to Protect Workers from Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica

Source: <http://www.osha.gov>

**Rule requires engineering controls to keep workers from breathing silica dust**

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued a final rule to curb lung cancer, silicosis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and kidney disease in America's workers by limiting their exposure to respirable crystalline silica. The rule is comprised of two standards, one for Construction and one for General Industry and Maritime.

OSHA estimates that the rule will save over 600 lives and prevent more than 900 new cases of silicosis each year, once its effects are fully realized. The Final Rule is projected to provide net benefits of about \$7.7 billion, annually.



**A Few Fall Produce Favorites**

Cooler weather and shorter days let us know that fall is almost here. Farmer’s markets and home gardens are starting to produce some favorite fall varieties. As we try to fill half our plate with fruits and/or vegetables, fall produce can make some economical, hearty, and delicious meals. Some top produce picks for this time of year include squash, pumpkin, kale, apples, pears, cranberries, and many others. Let’s take a closer look at a few favorites.

**Squash:** Numerous varieties picked during the fall are winter squash. Some of the most common include acorn, butternut, and spaghetti. Winter squash mature on the vine and have a thick, inedible skin. Choose squash that is heavy for its size. It can be stored for up to 3-6 months in a cool, dark place depending on the variety. Most varieties are good to excellent sources of vitamin C and vitamin A, fiber, potassium, and magnesium. Due to its thick skin, squash can be baked or steamed after cutting in half, then scoop the flesh when cooked. It can also be stuffed, peeled and diced, roasted, pureed into soups, and used in both savory and sweet dishes. The seeds of squash can be roasted just like pumpkin seeds.

**Kale:** Gaining in popularity in recent years, kale is a hearty grower in colder weather. Kale is a member of the cabbage family and is packed with nutrients including fiber, vitamins A, C, and K, folate, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, and various antioxidants. Choose dark colored branches with small to medium leaves. It can be stored in a plastic bag in the coldest part of the refrigerator for 3-5 days. When ready to cook, remove the thick stalk from the center. It can be eaten raw in salads, sautéed, added to pasta dishes, braised with meats, steamed with spices, stir fried, added to soups, and baked into crispy chips.

**Cranberries:** According to the Wisconsin Cranberry Growers Association, Wisconsin is the number one cranberry producer in the country supplying more than 60% of the nation’s cranberries. They grow on low running vines. When ready for harvest, the marshes are flooded with water, making the berries float which aids in harvesting. They are high in antioxidants, vitamin C, and fiber. Fresh berries can be stored in the refrigerator up to 2 months, or they can be frozen for future use. They can be added to baked goods, smoothies, baked with apples into sauces, and used in various savory dishes as well.

For more information on seasonal fruits and vegetables, recipes, shopping and cooking tips, and fun information for kids, check out [www.fruitsandveggiesmatters.org](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatters.org)

About 2.3 million workers are exposed to respirable crystalline silica in their workplaces, including 2 million construction workers who drill, cut, crush, or grind silica-containing materials such as concrete and stone, and 300,000 workers in general industry operations such as brick manufacturing, foundries, and hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. Responsible employers have been protecting workers from harmful exposure to respirable crystalline silica for years, using widely-available equipment that controls dust with water or a vacuum system.

**Key Provisions**

1. Reduces the permissible exposure limit (PEL) for respirable crystalline silica to 50 micrograms per cubic meter of air, averaged over an 8-hour shift.
2. 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.
3. Provides medical exams to monitor highly exposed workers and gives them information about their lung health.
4. Provides flexibility to help employers — especially small businesses — protect workers from silica exposure.

*Find out next week the scheduled rule change!*

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