University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Policy on OSHA’s Crystalline Silica Standard

Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of the crystalline silica policy is to provide a means by which employees can be protected from the hazards associated with silica dust and develop procedures by which employees shall follow when there is a potential for silica dust exposure.

Crystalline silica (SiO$_2$) is a very common inorganic compound found in sand, stone, concrete, mortar, glass, bricks, and many other everyday objects. Respirable crystalline silica is created when products that contain crystalline silica are disturbed through tasks such as and not limited to grinding, cutting, chipping, sanding, breaking open rocks in a lab space, art projects, and other processes that could disturb the material.

SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all Faculty, Staff (includes all full-time, part-time, temporary), Students and all contractors working on behalf of the University.

Policy

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) values the health and safety of its Faculty, Staff, Students and contractors. All UNC-CH Faculty, Staff, Students and contractors working on behalf of UNC-CH must take the steps outlined in this policy and associated Standard to ensure their health and safety when working with crystalline silica.

To ensure exposure to silica dust in and around the workplace is minimized, all UNC-Chapel Hill Faculty, Staff, Students and contractors working on behalf of the University shall review departmental procedures to ensure all rules and regulations are followed when working with items that could potentially contain crystalline silica, monitor activities that could potentially contain crystalline silica, complete awareness training, and assess if equipment/tools being used are compliant with current standards established by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

Environment, Health and Safety (EHS)

UNC EHS is responsible for developing policy and guidance to facilitate departmental compliance with this
standard through exposure monitoring, equipment/tool/task/procedure assessment, awareness training, and medical surveillance to ensure a safe and healthy workplace for University employees. Additionally, EHS is responsible for developing and annually maintaining a Crystalline Silica Exposure Control Plan (hyper link).

**Directors and/or Department Chairs**

Directors and/or Department Chairs are responsible for ensuring employees who may work with material containing crystalline silica are provided with the appropriate resources to ensure compliance with this policy.

**Supervisors**

Supervisors are responsible for assessing the task to be performed, providing OSHA-compliant equipment/tools, providing job specific training on correct use of the tool to minimize/eliminate potential exposures, ensure that silica awareness training is completed, and provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) necessary to complete the job safely. If additional equipment or tools are needed to safely complete a task, then the Supervisor must provide specific information to the Director/Departmental Chair. If medical surveillance is indicated for an employee, the Supervisor must monitor to ensure employee makes and attends appointment with the University Employee Occupational Health Clinic.

**Employees**

Employees are responsible for completing all necessary training, utilizing equipment/tools in appropriate fashion and donning assigned PPE to eliminate or minimize potential exposures. If medical surveillance is indicated, then the employee must schedule and attend their medical surveillance evaluation with the University Employee Occupational Health Clinic. All maintenance personnel and construction personnel are responsible for understanding and following the requirements of the OSHA respirable crystalline silica policy.

**Contractors**

Departments who hire contractors are responsible for ensuring they follow all guidelines necessary when disturbing material containing crystalline silica

**Definitions**

*Action Level*- A measured level that when exceeded is considered sufficient to warrant regulatory or remedial action to protect employees.

*DOL*- Department of Labor

*OSHA*- Occupational Safety and Health Administration

*PEL*- The permissible exposure limit is a legal limit for exposure to a chemical or physical agent. PEL is usually measured as a time weighted average.

**Related Requirements**

**EXTERNAL REGULATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

1. OSHA regulates occupational exposure of employees who are involved in working with materials that contain crystalline silica (*29 CFR 1910.1053* and *29 CFR 1926.1153*).
UNIVERSITY STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

1. UNC-CH Standard on Crystalline Silica [insert hyperlink]
2. UNC-CH Crystalline Silica Exposure Control Plan (place holder)

Contact Information

Any questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Department of Environment, Health and Safety:

- EHS Executive Director EHS/Risk Management and/or Workplace Safety Manager
  - Unit: Environment, Health and Safety
  - Web: https://ehs.unc.edu/
  - Phone: 919-962-5507

All revision dates:

Attachments:

UNE-Chapel Hill Policy Submission Form - Crystalline Silica Standard.pdf

Approval Signatures

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