



Breathe Cleaner

Many construction activities generate dust; two key hazards that may result from that dust is lead and crystalline silica exposure. Lead dust can be generated during demolition of structures with lead paint; other sources may include lead pipes and fittings, lead linings in tanks, leaded glass, and soldering. Silica can be generated when cutting, sawing, grinding, drilling, and crushing stone, rock, concrete, brick, block, or mortar.

Health effects from prolonged exposure to lead can result in a person feeling, depressed, distracted, forgetful, irritable, and nauseous. Other risks include high blood pressure, heart disease, kidney disease, anemia, brain damage, and reduced fertility. Lead may be breathed in, absorbed through the skin, or ingested. Workers exposed to lead should not take their work clothes home.

Over exposure to silica can lead to lung cancer, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), silicosis, and even kidney disease. OSHA started enforcing a revised silica standard in 2018 with very specific guidance on control methods. Please refer to www.osha.gov for detailed guidance.

Respiratory Protection

- Keep the respirator clean and store it carefully in a rigid plastic case when not in use.
- Leave the work area before you take off your respirator.
- Respiratory protection is a key component in protecting workers.
- Comply with all components of an effective respiratory protection program that includes health screening, fit testing, training, cartridge selection/change schedule, maintenance, and storage.

Other Safety Measures

- **Distancing:** Work as far away from the dust as you can. In addition to wearing personal protective equipment, workers should be positioned upwind from the work and use a long torch (up to 6 feet) when possible.
- Consider mechanical removal, or reverse installation, to minimize torch cutting. Disassembly is slower, but safer for employee health.
- Remove or encapsulate lead paint along cut lines.
- When paint removal is necessary, use tool shrouds to capture dust.

Dust it Off

Another element of worksite hygiene is to control dust levels whenever possible.

Dust control methods

- Water sprays on drills or saws
- Tool shrouds
- Respirators for jackhammers
- Dust collectors on grinders
- If a dust abatement measure is available, use it. Ask your supervisor if you don't know how to use it correctly.

Source: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration; The Mount Sinai-Irving J. Sellkoff Center for Occupational and Environmental Medicine, Construction Hygiene and Ergonomics Program

Safety tips developed based on generally accepted safety standards believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is for general guidance only and should not be relied upon for legal compliance purposes.

Founded in 1925, CopperPoint Insurance Companies is a western-based super regional commercial insurance company and a leading provider of workers' compensation and commercial insurance solutions. With an expanded line of insurance products and a growing 10 state footprint in the western United States, CopperPoint is in a strong position to meet the evolving needs of our brokers, agents and customers.

The company has \$4.8 billion in total assets and an enterprise surplus of \$1.4 billion. The CopperPoint Family of Insurance Companies include CopperPoint, Alaska National and PacificComp. All companies are rated A (Excellent) by AM Best.