

OSHA releases new guide to help small businesses comply with silica rule for construction

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released the *Small Entity Compliance Guide for Respirable Crystalline Silica Standard for Construction*, which is intended to help small-business employers comply with the agency's Final Rule to Protect Workers from Exposure to Respirable Crystalline Silica. The guide describes the steps that employers are required to take to protect employees in construction from the hazards associated with silica exposure. All entities covered must provide respiratory protection when required, restrict silica exposure from house-keeping practices where feasible, implement a written exposure-control plan, offer medical exams to workers who will need to wear a respirator for 30 or more days a year, and keep records of medical examinations. Enforcement of the final rule in construction is due to begin June 23, 2017.

To help members comply with the new OSHA silica rule, PCI created a Respirable Crystalline Silica section under Technical Resources in the Members Only section of <http://www.pci.org>; hosted a two-day workshop this past fall in Nashville, Tenn; and created the *PCI Silica Manual*, which is available to download in the Respirable Crystalline Silica section of the website. For more information, contact Jim Lewis, PCI's architectural services manager, at jlewis@pci.org.

New ASTM standard covers ground calcium carbonate, filler use in concrete

ASTM has released the *Specification for Ground Calcium Carbonate and Aggregate Mineral Fillers for Use in Hydraulic Cement Concrete*, C1797, a new specification to help with efforts to enhance concrete properties while also reducing cement content, and thus carbon dioxide emissions. ASTM International's committee C09 on concrete and concrete aggregates developed the standard.

Caroline Talbot, an ASTM member and national technical service manager at Euclid Chemical, says that the new standard covers the use of ground calcium carbonate and aggregate

mineral fillers used in concrete. "Limestone and fillers can help optimize concrete mix design in terms of workability and finishing by improving packing density," Talbot says. "Notably, this will reduce the amount of cementitious product needed for concrete production, making it a more environmentally friendly alternative."


Better packing density improves both plastic and hardened properties, including shrinkage. In addition, there are indications that the presence of ground limestone enhances the hydration of cement and fly ash. This standard will allow companies to show that their materials can be used in concrete without negatively affecting fresh or hardened properties, leading to cost savings and environmental sustainability.

Specification for Ground Calcium Carbonate and Aggregate Mineral Fillers for Use in Hydraulic Cement Concrete is available at <http://www.astm.org>.

OSHA proposes to amend respiratory protection standard

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) issued a notice of proposed rulemaking to add two quantitative fit-testing protocols to the agency's Respiratory Protection Standard. The protocols would apply to employers in the general, shipyard, and construction industries.

Appendix A of the standard contains mandatory respirator fit-testing methods that employers must use to ensure that their employees' respirators fit properly and protect the wearer. The standard also allows individuals to submit new fit-test protocols for OSHA approval. TSI Inc. submitted an application for new protocols for full-facepiece and half-mask elastomeric respirators and filtering facepiece respirators. The proposed protocols are variations of the existing OSHA-accepted PortaCount protocol but differ from it by the exercise sets, exercise duration, and sampling sequence.

This proposed rulemaking would allow employers greater flexibility in choosing fit-testing methods for employees. The proposed rule would not require an employer to update or replace current fit-testing methods as long as the fit-testing methods meet existing standards. The proposal also would not impose additional costs on any private- or public-sector entity. 

Compiled by K. Michelle Burgess (mburgess@pci.org)

Events

For the most current information on events, visit <http://www.pci.org/events>.

TRB 96th Annual Meeting Washington, D.C.	January 8-12, 2017
World of Concrete Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, Nev.	January 16-20, 2017
61st BetonTage Edwin-Scharff-Haus Congress Center, New Ulm, Germany	February 14-16, 2017
ASCE CI Summit Anaheim, Calif.	March 2-5, 2017
11th High Performance Concrete and Second Concrete Innovation Conference Clarion Hotel The Edge, Tromsø, Norway	March 6-8, 2017
ACI Spring Convention Marriott Detroit at the Renaissance Center, Detroit, Mich.	March 26-30, 2017
SEI Structures Congress Colorado Convention Center, Denver, Colo.	April 6-8, 2017
AIA Convention Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.	April 27-29, 2017
2017 PTI Convention Hyatt Regency, Atlanta, Ga.	April 30-May 3, 2017
IPI Conference & Expo Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, La.	May 21-24, 2017
International Bridge Conference Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, National Harbor, Md.	June 4-8, 2017
fib Symposium 2017: High Tech Concrete: Where Technology and Engineering Meet Maastricht Exhibition and Conference Centre, Maastricht, Netherlands	June 12-16, 2017
ICC Annual Conference Greater Columbus Convention Center, Columbus, Ohio	September 10-12, 2017
AASHTO 2017 Annual Meeting Sheraton Grand Phoenix, Phoenix, Ariz.	September 25-28, 2017
Third International Symposium on Ultra-High Performance Fibre-Reinforced Concrete The Corum, Montpellier, France	October 2-4, 2017
ASCE 2017 Convention New Orleans, La.	October 8-11, 2017
ACI Fall Convention Disneyland Hotel, Anaheim, Calif.	October 15-19, 2017
ASBI Annual Convention New York Marriott Marquis, New York, N.Y.	October 24-25, 2017