



CPWR – The Center for  
Construction Research  
and Training

Building & Construction  
Trades Department,  
AFL-CIO

Duke University  
Medical Center

University of Cincinnati  
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Zenith American Solutions

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Battelle Labs –  
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National Laboratory

Brush Luckey

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Huntington Pilot Plant

INL

Kansas City Plant

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Paducah

Pinellas

Piqua

Portsmouth

Rocky Flats

Savannah River Site


Shippingport

Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

Weldon Spring

Yucca Mountain

## Building Trades National Medical Screening Program

P.O. Box 900960 ▪ Seattle, WA 98109 ▪ 1-800-866-9663 

### SILICA

#### What is silica?

Silica is a mineral found in quartz, sand, and rock.

Construction jobs such as abrasive blasting with sand, mixing mortar, grinding masonry, sawing bricks, and other jobs that generate concrete dust cause fine silica dust to be suspended in the air. The dust may be so fine that you cannot see it, and you breathe it in without feeling it.

The tiny silica dust particles get trapped deep in the lungs, causing scarring and other damage. This lung disease is called *silicosis*. Silicosis can worsen over time and also increases your risk of lung cancer.

#### What is the purpose of this exam?

Your screening interview showed that you may have been exposed to silica at work. If you were exposed, it is important to monitor your health, especially your lungs. Checking your health will help us decide whether you need treatment or more tests.

#### What are we looking for?

We are looking for the symptoms of silicosis: shortness of breath and a cough that brings up mucus (called “sputum”). We will check your breathing capacity using a *spirometer*. We will take a chest x-ray to look for scarring on your lungs caused by silica dust.

You will receive a letter summarizing your exam and photocopies of your test results. All your results are confidential, as defined in your Consent Statement.

#### What if my test results are positive?

If your test results show that you may have silicosis, you will be referred to your doctor or a specialist for follow-up tests or treatment.

#### What other steps should I take?

Silicosis most often takes years to develop. And because silicosis can get worse even after you stop working around silica dust, it is important to have regular check-ups.

Contact your doctor if you get a long-lasting cold or cough or shortness of breath.

Avoid breathing in any dust, chemical, or other substance that could hurt your lungs. If you have been given a respirator at work, wear it!

#### What if I have more questions?

If you have questions after this exam, ask your personal physician. Or call our toll-free number at 1-800-866-9663. We will refer you to a professional who can answer your questions.