DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Policy Number:	**105.134**
Title:	**Respirable Silica**
Effective Date:	**10/26/26**

PURPOSE: To ensure appropriate precautions are taken to prevent harmful exposure to respirable silica.

APPLICABILITY: Department-wide

DEFINITIONS:

Competent person – an individual who is capable of identifying existing and foreseeable respirable crystalline silica hazards in the workplace, and who has authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate or minimize them.

Construction work – construction, alteration, or repair, including painting and decorating.

Respirable silica – very small particles of crystalline silica, about 100 times smaller than a grain of sand found on a beach, that can be inhaled deep into the lungs. Silica is a common mineral compound (silicon dioxide) that is a constituent of most earth rocks and the main component of sand. Respirable silica is typically created in processes such as sanding, grinding, cutting, drilling, or crushing silica into smaller particles.

PROCEDURES:

A. Responsibilities

1. The safety director for the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) maintains a written respirable silica safety program in compliance with federal occupational safety and health administration (OSHA) standard 1926.1153 (Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1926.1153).

2. The physical plant director/designee or work supervisor:
   a) Ensures employees who may be exposed to respirable silica complete training;

   b) Ensures compliance with DOC Policy 105.115, "Respiratory Protection Program;"

   c) Ensures engineering control methods, as specified in Table 1 of OSHA standard § 1926.1153, whenever possible for construction work. Examples of engineering control methods include the use of integrated water or vacuum systems for equipment that generates respirable silica;

   d) Designates the competent person(s) (see section A.4, below);

   e) Implements alternative exposure control methods, including an exposure

assessment process, if precautions listed in Table 1 of OSHA standard § 1926.1153 are not fully utilized;

f) Implements medical surveillance in compliance with OSHA standard § 1926.1153 for each employee who will be required to use a respirator for 30 or more days a year for respirable silica; and

g) Notifies the safety administrator/designee whenever there is potential for exposure to respirable silica.

3. The safety administrator/designee:
   a) Provides training in compliance with OSHA standard § 1926.1153;

   b) Provides assistance with an exposure assessment and medical surveillance processes when required by OSHA standard § 1926.1153;

   c) Retains exposure assessment data, or objective data, and communicates the results to the physical plant director, work supervisor, and affected employees; and

   d) Evaluates the potential for exposure to respirable silica in non-construction work activities and provides guidance in compliance with OSHA standard § 1910.1053.

4. The competent person must:
   a) Complete training in compliance with OSHA standard § 1926.1153; and

   b) Make frequent and regular inspections of job sites, materials, and equipment to implement the exposure control plan.

5. Employees must:
   a) Complete required training and document it in the DOC-approved electronic training management system;

   b) Follow appropriate exposure-control methods;

   c) Follow the requirements of DOC Policy 105.115, “Respiratory Protection Program”; and

   d) Notify their supervisor(s) of potential exposure to respirable silica.

B. Training
   1. Employees who may be exposed to respirable silica are required to complete training in compliance with OSHA standard § 1926.1153.

   2. Training must include the following elements listed in OSHA standard § 1926.1153 for construction work:

a) Health hazards associated with exposure to respirable silica;

b) Specific tasks that could result in exposure to respirable silica;

c) Specific measures that are implemented to protect employees from exposure to respirable silica;

d) Identity of the competent person(s) designated by the physical plant director/designee or supervisor;

e) Medical surveillance program, if applicable; and

f) How to obtain additional information and a copy of OSHA standard § 1926.1153.

3. Training must be documented in the DOC-approved electronic training management system, where it is retained per the employee development retention schedule.

INTERNAL CONTROLS:

A. The facility safety administrator retains exposure assessment data, or objective data.

B. Training is documented in the DOC-approved electronic training management system.

STATE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY SECURITY AUDIT STANDARDS: None

REFERENCES: Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Construction Industry standard 1926.1153, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 1926.1153
OSHA General Industry standard 1910.1053, CFR § 1910.1053
Policy 105.115, "Respiratory Protection Program"

REPLACES: Policy 105.134, "Respirable Silica," 7/21/20.
All facility policies, memos, or other communications, whether verbal, written, or transmitted by electronic means, regarding this topic.

ATTACHMENTS: None

APPROVALS:
Commissioner of Corrections