

Not Silica Safety Compliant?

Think enforcement of the September 2017 silica safety regulation isn't a high priority for workplace safety officials? Better think again. OSHA and state safety agencies are aggressively ramping up inspections across the country. The initial wave of fines have been issued, but given the typical lag time between inspections and the actual assessment of fines, all indications are that this is going to be just the tip of the enforcement iceberg.

The lion's share of citations during the first six months of enforcement were considered serious violations, with \$9,239 being the highest fine. The most common offense was the failure of contractors to properly measure exposure levels. The second most common offense was non-compliance with the new regulation's Table 1, which offers 18 air monitoring alternatives to contractors.

Regulation Awareness Is Up To You.

Even though OSHA postponed full enforcement for 30 days after the regulation's release, awareness and compliance have been slow to spread. Some industry officials and independent contractors have raised questions that need to be answered and point to regulation language they say is confusing and needs to be clarified. But until this happens, many industry officials feel that some avoidable citations could be the result. Unfortunately, small contractors and subcontractors are always the most vulnerable in a situation like this. Industry associations are helping to shoulder the push to get the word out, but if you fall into this category, compliance is your responsibility alone.

Don't Wait On This One.

Many of the silica safety citations came as a result of OSHA inspections that were mainly focused on fall protection. So, you might not completely understand the finer points of the new regulation, but don't put your compliance efforts on the back burner until you do. The stakes are high and your crews could be at risk for serious health consequences or even death from preventable respiratory problems. Act now to learn more about what you need to do to be compliant. Your local White Cap team is well versed in the regulation's requirements and they stock all of the equipment needed.

digging deeper

Check out these links for more information on Silica Dust and OSHA enforcement:

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3911.pdf>

<https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/standardinterpretations/2018-06-07>

<http://www.ehstoday.com/construction/what-first-six-months-silica-enforcement-tells-us>

<https://www.bna.com/silica-safety-enforcement-n57982091432/>