

## How can I report silicosis cases?

- Report cases directly to the Environmental & Injury Epidemiology & Toxicology Unit, DSHS, by calling our toll-free number **(800) 588-1248**.
- Fax case reports to **(512) 776-7222**.
- Mail case reports to:  
**Environmental & Injury Epidemiology & Toxicology Unit  
PO Box 149347  
Austin, TX 78714-9347**
- Case reports can also be reported to a local or regional DSHS staff member.
- Download Silicosis Case Report forms: <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/epitox>

## What information do I need to report?

Case reports should contain the following information at a minimum:

- Diagnosis
- Patient name and address
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Race and ethnicity
- Smoking history
- Occupational history (employer, dates of employment, occupation/job activities)
- Diagnosing physician's name and address
- Reporting physician's name and address

## How are the data used?

- To help public health authorities identify ongoing hazardous exposures and the extent of exposures.
- To identify exposure incidents, provide assistance, and make recommendations to prevent and control future exposures.
- To develop targeted education and prevention materials.

## Where can I get more information?

Texas Department of State Health Services  
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/epitox>

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration  
<http://www.osha.gov>

The majority of the source material in this brochure was adapted from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) websites.

We would like to thank the New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services Silicosis Surveillance & Intervention Program for contributing photos to this project.

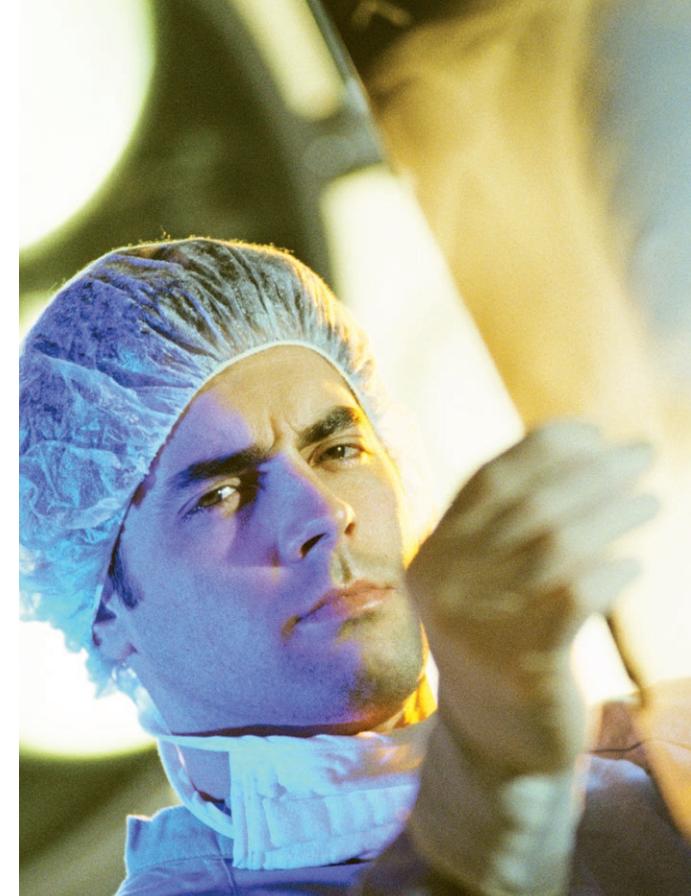


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# What Healthcare Providers Need to Know About Reporting Silicosis

Environmental & Injury  
Epidemiology & Toxicology Unit  
Texas Department of State Health Services

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

## What is silicosis?

Silicosis is a fibrotic lung disease that is disabling and often fatal. The effects of silicosis cannot be reversed, but developing silicosis can be prevented. Working in industries that handle or generate silica dust greatly increases the likelihood of exposure and ultimately the onset of silicosis and related diseases.

## How does silicosis develop?

- The silica particles may be inhaled and become trapped in the lungs.
- The particles activate an immune response, and the immune system may become compromised and unable to fight off illness.
- With increased exposure and inhalation of silica dust, the lungs become damaged, which affects respiratory efficiency.
- Some other diseases may be linked to breathing respirable silica dust.

## What are some symptoms of silicosis?

- Shortness of breath
- Severe cough
- Wheezing
- Weakness
- Chest pain
- Reduced lung capacity
- Difficult breathing
- Bluish or grayish skin color

As the disease advances:

- Shortness of breath becomes worse
- Cough becomes worse
- Lung x-rays show scar tissue
- Tiredness increases
- Loss of appetite can occur

## How is silicosis diagnosed?

- Collect a work history
- Perform a physical exam
- Perform diagnostic tests such as X-rays and lung function tests

## What is silica?

Crystalline silica is one of the most common minerals in the earth's crust. It is found in sand and many types of rocks and ores, including quartz.

Respirable silica dust is invisible to the naked eye. It is so light that it can stay airborne for a long time. Because it can travel long distances in the air, it can affect populations not otherwise considered to be at risk.

## How can silica exposure occur?

- Inhaling silica dust is the leading cause of silicosis.
- People with silicosis usually developed the disease after being exposed to silica dust at work.
- When working with materials that may produce silica dust, small pieces of silica may enter the breathing space of workers.



## What occupations are at risk of exposure to silica?

Some examples include:

- Highway and bridge construction and repair
- Building construction, demolition, and repair
- Abrasive blasting
- Masonry work
- Concrete finishing
- Drywall finishing
- Rock drilling
- Mining
- Sand and gravel screening
- Dental technicians
- Sandblasting



Potential silica exposure:  
highway construction.

## How can workers prevent silica exposure?

- Avoid working in dust whenever possible
- Use personal protective equipment properly
- Check that all ventilation systems and protective equipment are repaired and work correctly
- Avoid eating, drinking, or using tobacco products in dusty work areas
- Wash your hands and face before eating or drinking
- Shower and change clothes after working in contaminated areas before getting in your car and going home
- Get a regular medical checkup with pulmonary function tests and X-rays
- Follow Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Mine and Safety Health Administration (MSHA) regulations

## What regulation requires healthcare providers to report silicosis cases?

Silicosis is required to be reported to the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) in accordance with the Texas Occupational Condition Reporting Act, Health and Safety Code, Chapter 84.

All information reported to DSHS is confidential.

## Who is responsible for reporting silicosis cases?

- Physicians
- Health professionals
- Any person in charge of a clinical or hospital laboratory, blood bank, mobile unit or other facility