

# News Release



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Contact: Amy Louviere  
Phone: 202-693-9423

## **US Labor Department's MSHA to hold series of workshops on controlling respirable coal mine dust** *One-day sessions to focus on prevention of disabling occupational lung diseases*

**ARLINGTON, Va.** – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), along with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), will hold the first in a series of regional one-day workshops titled "Best Practices for Controlling Respirable Dust in Coal Mines" on Tuesday, Nov. 3, at the Mine Health and Safety Academy in Beaver, W.Va.

Inhalation of excessive amounts of respirable coal mine dust can cause coal workers' pneumoconiosis (CWP) and other lung diseases, commonly referred to as "black lung." Likewise, overexposure to respirable silica dust can lead to silicosis.

"These are debilitating occupational lung diseases that can devastate a miner's quality of life, impose heavy burdens on the victim and his or her family, and, in some cases, lead to premature death," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. "But while there is no cure for black lung disease or silicosis, they are entirely preventable."

While significant progress has been made since 1970 in lowering dust levels in our nation's coal mines, recent information published by NIOSH indicates that severe cases of CWP continue to occur among coal miners. Most troubling is the fact that new cases of progressive massive fibrosis, the most disabling and potentially fatal form of CWP, have been identified in some of the younger miners in the industry.

The workshop will bring together a group of dust control experts from MSHA and NIOSH's Office of Mine Safety and Health to share their knowledge and experience and help mine operators control dust concentration levels more effectively in coal mines using practical dust control tools and techniques to prevent disabling occupational lung diseases. Mine managers and operational staff, mine workers, safety and health professionals, mine engineers, manufacturers, consultants and anyone else with an interest in preventing occupational lung disease in coal miners are encouraged to attend.

Topics to be covered in the workshop, which will run from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. EST, include "health consequences of overexposure to respirable coal and silica dust," "sampling to quantify respirable dust generation," "continuous miner and roof bolter dust control," "proper examination of roof bolter and other dust control systems," "how to correctly determine the dust scrubber air quantity," controlling respirable dust on longwall mining operations," and "silica dust controls for surface mines."

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