

# Surface Coal Facilities— Preparation Plants and Shops

Health Hazard Information Sheet 46

U.S. Department of Labor  
Mine Safety and Health Administration



Black lung and silicosis are disabling and sometimes fatal lung diseases that coal miners can get from breathing coal mine dust. Surface facilities present unique problems in controlling miners' dust exposure because of a variety of dust-generating sources. Crushers, shaker screens, chutes, belt transfer points, and other mining equipment are all potential sources of these harmful dusts. We know from sampling results that if respirable coal mine dust is not adequately controlled at these locations, miners working in surface coal facilities can be exposed to excessive dust levels.

MSHA has developed this guide to assist miners and mine operators in using all available tools to **Act NOW** and **END Black Lung**.

## Miners and Mine Operators Should ALWAYS:

- Wash down dusty surfaces.
- Keep conveyor belts and adjacent walkways clean and free of coal spills and accumulations.
- Use and maintain dust controls, such as exhaust fans, local exhaust ventilation and dust collection systems, while avoiding re-circulation of previously generated dust.
- Use and maintain water sprays, seals, shrouds, covers, hoods or enclosures over crushers, screens, and at transfer points to prevent or reduce dust generation, confine generated dust, minimize emission and dispersion.
- Use a sweeping compound when sweeping walkways and floors.
- Limit work activities in known dust-generating areas.
- Keep doors and windows in cabs, control booths, and other enclosures closed.

- Inspect, repair, or report defects on door seals and window seals of cabs, control booths, and other enclosures.
- Follow established preventive maintenance procedures to ensure reliable and efficient operation of provided dust control systems.
- Use properly selected and fitted, NIOSH-approved respirators made available by the mine operator when dust exceeds levels permitted by MSHA standards. (**Remember**, MSHA does NOT accept respirators as a primary means of dust control.)

You Should **NEVER**:

- Use compressed air to clean dust from equipment, floors and walls, or from your clothing.
- Remove water sprays, shrouds, covers, hoods or enclosures over crushers and screens, or other dust controls.
- Allow dust to accumulate in your work area.
- Open doors or windows in cabs, control booths, or other enclosures.

**--Remember--  
Black lung is NOT curable, but it is preventable!**

If you have questions about coal mine health matters, please contact your local MSHA office or see the MSHA website at [www.msha.gov](http://www.msha.gov).