



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 23, 2013

Contact: Angela Bradbery, abradbery@citizen.org (202) 588-7741, or Brian Gumm, bgumm@foreffectivegov.org (202) 683-4812

Improved Silica Standards Will Save Lives

Updated OSHA Rule Still Must Be Finalized

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The [Coalition for Sensible Safeguards](#) (CSS) welcomed [today's proposal from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) to tighten standards for silica exposure on the job. The proposed rule will save around 700 lives each year by limiting construction and manufacturing workers' exposure to deadly silica dust, and it will prevent the annual occurrence of about 1,600 cases of a debilitating lung disease known as silicosis.

“This is a strong rule that will protect workers from unnecessary disease and death,” said Peg Seminario, director of Safety and Health for the [AFL-CIO](#). “It is now crucial that OSHA and the Obama administration move forward as quickly as possible to finalize the rule while thwarting any industry attacks that may be launched against the improved standards.”

The proposed rule is long overdue. It had been under review at the White House's Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) since February 14, 2011, well beyond the 120-day deadline.

Workers are exposed to silica by inhaling small particles from blasting, cutting, drilling and grinding stone materials at work sites such as construction operations, glass manufacturing plants and foundries. This exposure can cause silicosis and lung cancer.

The proposed rule will cut permitted silica dust exposure levels in half, require monitoring and medical exams for exposed workers and require implementation of dust control methods, including adequate ventilation.

“The proposed rule represents a major improvement in protections for workers – especially those at risk of respiratory diseases,” said Katherine McFate, president and CEO of the [Center for Effective Government](#) and CSS co-chair. “It is essential for workers, their families and the public to weigh in and let the administration know we want this rule finalized.”

Once the proposed rule is published in the *Federal Register*, the public will have 90 days to weigh in. OSHA will also hold public hearings on the rule, which are scheduled to begin March

4, 2013. The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards will post instructions on how to comment on the rule as soon as they become available; check www.sensible safeguards.org for updates.

###

The Coalition for Sensible Safeguards is an alliance of consumer, labor, scientific, research, good government, faith, community, health, environmental, and public interest groups, as well as concerned individuals, joined in the belief that our country's system of regulatory safeguards provides a stable framework that secures our quality of life and paves the way for a sound economy that benefits us all. For more information about the coalition, see <http://www.sensible safeguards.org/about us>.