

## **Construction Dust**

<b>Depending on Assistance Needed, Call:</b>	
DGS Environmental Health and Safety	202-576-8962
Agency Contact	
Other	

### **Situation Description**

Anyone who's been on a school renovation site can tell that most dust is created during demolition and drywall sanding. It's important to try to take steps to reduce dust levels throughout a renovation or construction project to reduce health risks.

Construction dust can create serious health risks because typically there are harmful substances in the dust (man-made mineral fibers, silica, cement residue, wood dust, etc.). Health risks range from breathing difficulties, severe allergic reaction, eye irritation, and nose/throat irritation. Simple dust control or containment measures can reduce the health risks as well as reduce potential property damage, improve visibility levels on job sites, and reduce time-consuming final cleaning labor hours.

Respirable dust particles are those that are small enough to enter the gas exchange area of the human lung (10 microns or less in size). OSHA's established permissible exposure limit (PEL) for respirable nuisance dust is fifteen (15) mg/m<sup>3</sup>. The PEL is an 8-hour Time Weighted Average given for respirable dust in an 8-hour work shift of a 40-hour work week.

### **Legal Requirements**

In May of 2010, the Council of the District of Columbia unanimously passed the Healthy Schools Act of 2010, which includes the reduction of exposure to environmental factors that impact asthma among children and adults in the DC Public Schools, under Title V, and amending Sec. 504 of The Green Building Act of 2006 with the addition that schools shall aspire to meet LEED for Schools certification at the Gold level or higher. Indoor air should also be maintained to reduce problems qualify for LEED-NC 2.2 IEQ Credit 3.1 – 3.2 IAQ Management Plan.

### **Procedures**

Simple dust containment or dust reduction control measures include physical barriers (plywood or poly), watering sprays, air filtration through HEPA system, increased ventilation, and sweeping compounds. Air testing should also be performed according to LEED-NC 2.2 IEQ Credit 3.1 – 3.2 IAQ Management Plan. All questions or concerns regarding construction dust should be directed to the DGS Environmental Health and Safety, 202-576-8962.