



April 3, 2017

Subject: Information on USG Products and Silica

Safety Data Sheets for our ready mixed joint compound products and for our gypsum wallboard products are published to comply with the OSHA Hazard Communication Standard. With respect to respirable crystalline silica, the Safety Data Sheets report the levels of silica in the bulk materials used in the products, as well as information about industrial hygiene testing of the amount dust including respirable silica released from ready mixed joint compound products and gypsum wallboard during installation.

SHEETROCK® Brand All Purpose Joint Compound, Ready-Mixed

Raw materials in USG's All Purpose Joint Compound, Ready-Mixed contain respirable crystalline silica as an impurity. The weight percent of respirable crystalline silica found in this product is < 0.7%. We have conducted industrial hygiene testing on SHEETROCK® Brand All Purpose Joint Compound, Ready-Mixed products which show that during application the dust generated usually had respirable crystalline silica content below the new OSHA silica PEL. Our tests were consistent with prior studies of joint compound exposures published by OSHA and NIOSH. (3362 04 OSHA Controlling Silica Exposures in Construction and NIOSH 1994-0078-2660 study on drywall finishing) However, be aware that there are some formulas of our ready mixed joint compound products, as well as some other USG finishing products, including setting and powder type compounds, that may exceed the new PEL during application and therefore do carry a silica warning. Further details are found on the SDSs for those products.

OSHA has excluded Drywall Finishing from "Table One" of the new silica rule, indicating that the agency does not consider the activity to be a high respirable silica exposure risk. However, the OSHA rule also indicates that actual exposures to respirable crystalline silica on a given jobsite must be determined by workplace hygiene testing, so employers may still be required by OSHA to perform additional testing on actual jobsites.

USG supports OSHA's recommendation that employees engaged in drywall finishing use power sanders equipped with vacuum dust collection systems to take up dust as it is generated. This reduces total dust exposures and virtually eliminates any risk of silica exposure.



SHEETROCK® Brand Gypsum Panels

The gypsum used to manufacture these panels may contain respirable crystalline silica ranging up to 0.56 percent by weight, depending on source. Therefore, USG asked a third party laboratory to conduct industrial hygiene testing during the installation of our wallboard products. These tests have shown no release of respirable silica in excess of the new OSHA PEL during installation, including when cutting the product by “score and snap,” rotary saw, or circular saw. Those tests were conducted by a highly respected third party laboratory and the results were presented at the AIHCE 2014 see attached slides from that presentation and the abstract.

As mentioned above, although OSHA has excluded drywall finishing from “Table One” of the new silica rule, indicating that the agency does not consider the activity to be a high respirable silica exposure risk, the OSHA rule also indicates that actual exposures to respirable crystalline silica on a given jobsite must be determined by workplace hygiene testing, so employers may still be required by OSHA to perform additional testing on actual jobsites.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Lynn

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