

OSHA Issues Final Beryllium Rule

INTRODUCTION

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) issued a final rule to prevent beryllium disease and lung cancer in industries that may expose workers to beryllium metal and compounds. Beryllium is a lightweight, but extremely strong metal, used in the aerospace, electronics, telecommunications, medical, and defense industries. It is often found as a copper/beryllium alloy. Unfortunately, it is highly toxic and can cause Chronic Beryllium Disease: a serious and progressive lung disease that can be debilitating and fatal.

UPDATES TO THE STANDARD

The new standard lowers the Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) to 0.2 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) of air for an 8-hour exposure. The Action Level is 0.1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Companies having processes that generate beryllium dust must evaluate their employee exposure. If airborne levels exceed, or may exceed, the Action Level, the standard requires companies to draft a written Exposure Control Plan that addresses:

- Periodic exposure monitoring
- Engineering and work practices controls
- Regulated areas
- Respiratory protection program
- Personal protective equipment program
- Hygiene consideration including:
 - Change rooms
 - Wash and shower facilities
 - Eating and drinking areas
- Cleaning methods
- Medical surveillance
- Employee training

WHEN DOES THIS TAKE EFFECT?

The standard becomes effective March 10, 2017. Change rooms and showers must be provided by March 11, 2019. Engineering controls must be in place by March 10, 2020. More information can be found at the OSHA website: <https://www.osha.gov/berylliumrule/>.

HOW CAN EBI HELP YOU?

EBI Consulting is fully staffed to help you with all aspects of complying with the Beryllium standard. An EBI Certified Industrial Hygienist will conduct employee exposure monitoring and assist with program development. Our Energy and Sustainability staff can provide architects and engineers to design engineering controls, including local exhaust systems. Please call Peter Hosford at 1.617.715.7823 or e-mail phosford@ebiconsulting.com for additional information.