Disposable Respirators Fatality File

Case No. 1—Tile Installer

A white male non-smoker was diagnosed with advanced silicosis, emphysema, and asthma at age 49 after working 23 years as a tile installer. He had reported shortness of breath and pneumonia.

His work included polishing and drilling tile, and he was exposed to grout dust and sandblasting (though he did not do sandblasting). He did not use a respirator.

Case No. 2—Rock Driller

A 47-year-old man was diagnosed with severe silicosis after working 22 years as a rock driller. He was diagnosed after he was brought to a hospital with respiratory failure and right heart failure. In the Spring, while he was on a ventilator, he died from respiratory failure. His autopsy confirmed advanced silicosis.

Before this worker’s diagnosis, he had never seen a doctor and had never had a chest X-ray. The drills he used were equipped with dust controls, but they were routinely inoperable.