



**MSHA's Occupational Illness and Injury  
Prevention Program  
Miner's Tip**

**Your  
Health  
Comes  
First!**

**"Keep the Workplace Clean"**  
(Revised 04/02/2010)

High exposures to toxic dusts and chemicals can lead to long-term health problems. The following tips will minimize exposure to harmful chemicals and dusts. These tips are for miners working around shops and preparation plants, which may have many chemical hazards.

Many chemicals are used in mining and more are being introduced each day. A miner must take simple precautions to protect against exposure to hazardous chemicals. Most of the precautions are common sense.

Whenever possible, dust should be vacuumed with a HEPA vacuum cleaner instead of being swept up with a broom. Sweeping causes some of the dust to become airborne, allowing miners to inhale it. The dust will also resettle on surfaces, and the miner will have to clean the surfaces more often. Vacuuming the dust captures the dust, and once the dust is properly captured and disposed of, it cannot settle on new surfaces.



If the area is too large to use a vacuum cleaner, then wet sweeping is a technique to minimize the amount of dust that gets into the air. Water is sprayed on the area to be cleaned before the miner begins to sweep.

Other housekeeping chores can minimize unnecessary exposure to harmful chemicals. For example, spills should be cleaned up as soon as practical. Leaving a spill can not only be a slipping hazard, but can become a health hazard.

Keeping the workplace clean can help miners lower their potential risks of harmful chemical and dust exposures.

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**Remember - Your Health Comes First!**