Hexavalent Chromium Respiratory Documentation

Chromium Hexavalent (CrVI) also known as Hexavalent Chromium is at the forefront of huge changes in the respiratory standards. Primarily an issue for anyone welding or doing any other "Hot Work" on stainless steel, OSHA has recently mandated changes in the respiratory standard that has dropped the PEL (Permissible Exposure Limit) from 50 PPM to 5 PPM due to adverse health effects. From the OSHA website:

*Workers who breathe hexavalent chromium compounds at their jobs for many years may be at increased risk of developing lung cancer. Breathing high levels of hexavalent chromium can irritate or damage the nose, throat, and lungs. Irritation or damage to the eyes and skin can occur if hexavalent chromium contacts these organs in high concentrations or for a prolonged period of time.*

The solutions, assessments and recommendations concerning Hexavalent Chromium go beyond the scope of this short blog entry (I recently sat through an hour seminar on the topic that barely skimmed the surface of the issue).

The bottom line, however, is that if you or your employee are being exposed to it, in any form (the movie Erin Brokovich, for example, dealt with exposure in drinking water. Other possible sources of contamination include chromate pigments in dyes, paint, inks and plaster), you need to take measures. A great place to start is with the NIOSH website at [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2003-0114-2924.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2003-0114-2924.pdf) and the OSHA website at [http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hexavalentchromium/index.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hexavalentchromium/index.html)