



**RG** CONSTRUCTION

## CASE STUDY

*Expertise in Action:*

# How HUB Helped RG Construction Stay Ahead of the Competition



RG Construction needed help deciphering new silica regulations — a task that seemed almost insurmountable to the Illinois-based commercial wall and ceiling contractor. HUB drew on its extensive experience in regulatory compliance to help.

### **It all started with a notice.**

In early spring of 2017, Brian Garcea, principal of RG Construction, received a note from OSHA warning of an impending update for silica guidelines, going into effect that fall. He knew that the implications could be huge for both him and his customers.

Long-term exposure to silica — an integral part of certain building materials — has been linked to some respiratory diseases and is regulated by the federal government.

Concerned about scrambling to comply with the new regulations, Brian worried that the process might be difficult, and that implementation of the new rules might affect company operations.

“We had a duty to our employees and others on the jobs,” Brian said. “Testing wasn’t good enough, a plan wasn’t good enough: It had to be both.”

**“We needed to help OSHA and our customers understand not only what actions we were taking, but why.”**

### **So he reached out to HUB.**

There, he reconnected with HUB Risk Manager Phil Casto.

“Phil knew all about the new silica standard, but since it was so new, there were no guidelines on how to implement it. Phil used his background and experience to advise,” Garcea said.

For Phil, it was all in a day’s work.

“I work with clients to identify opportunities for them to better manage their own risk. Each client has a unique need. My role is to find the right fit for them based on their needs,” Phil said.

Phil’s hands-on philosophy drives his work ethic. As self-avowed “OSHA junkie”, he was ready when he got the call.

“RG is in a unique industry — framing, drywall, wall coatings and coverings. Silica regulations don’t directly connect to what they do, but silica is in the mud they’re applying and sanding.”



**“It’s a hands-on role, not just the overall strategy. It’s about getting your hands dirty, going out to the field. Credibility isn’t built in a conference room.”**

### **The beginning of a great collaboration**

Phil tapped into his previous experience and knowledge of OSHA to formulate a course of action.

Phil and Brian assessed the risk and established a baseline. Then they created a plan to test airborne samples for current silica levels.

“We worked together for six months to identify the major products we use containing silica, and how we use them,” Brian told us. “Phil put air sampling devices on employees on site to measure the data on the products we were using. Based on testing, we determined our level of exposure and what we needed to address.”

The good news: “Our amount of respirable silica generated was actually very small. We went from a huge potential risk to something manageable,” Brian said with evident relief.

The regulation didn't specifically address their construction activity. RG wasn't sure what the exposure was, if the regulation applied to them. But their customers were worried after seeing the safety data sheets, and wanted to know what they were doing to control it.

Phil was familiar with the challenge. HUB makes it a priority to help customers communicate with their own clients. Beyond acting as an advisor, he provides resources like guidelines, toolbox talks and checklists to help everyone come to a shared understanding. In RG's case, he and Brian devised a customer communication plan and disseminated it.

"We needed to get the plan out to 30 jobs and communicate with their safety officers," Brian said. "We responded professionally with the help of HUB and gave them more info than anyone else — my competitors weren't providing the same level of detail as we did in our plan. It minimized the impact on how we do our jobs, and educated our customers and employees," Brian said.

### A collaborative experience that helped define the company

**Brian said that working with Phil and HUB helped to elevate the value of his company.**

"People choose to work with RG because of the experiences they have with us," Brian said. "Having a program in place was essential — no one else was ready for OSHA silica compliance, but we were."

Having Phil talk to our customers (safety officers and managers) helped tell our story. It lends to our credibility as a company.

Customers think 'they're proactive, they're on top of it' and it only furthered the way we go to market, as a thought leader."

Phil agreed.

"Our work with RG put them ahead of the curve for contractors, since the others were so reluctant to get on board. RG holds themselves to higher standards. They work for the best general contractors in Chicago," Phil said of the iconic work RG has done for well-known locales, such as Soldier Field and the modern wing of the Art Institute.

"They're expected to be in compliance. But their ability to account for this regulation sets them apart. Now, they can answer the questions people ask thoroughly. They also gained peace of mind. We did air sampling in their common work activities, with the dust collection in place, and with it not in place. They can confidently say they are in compliance and weren't over exposing people. They can feel better about it from a management standpoint. It helps them sleep at night."

## An ongoing partnership that delivers more

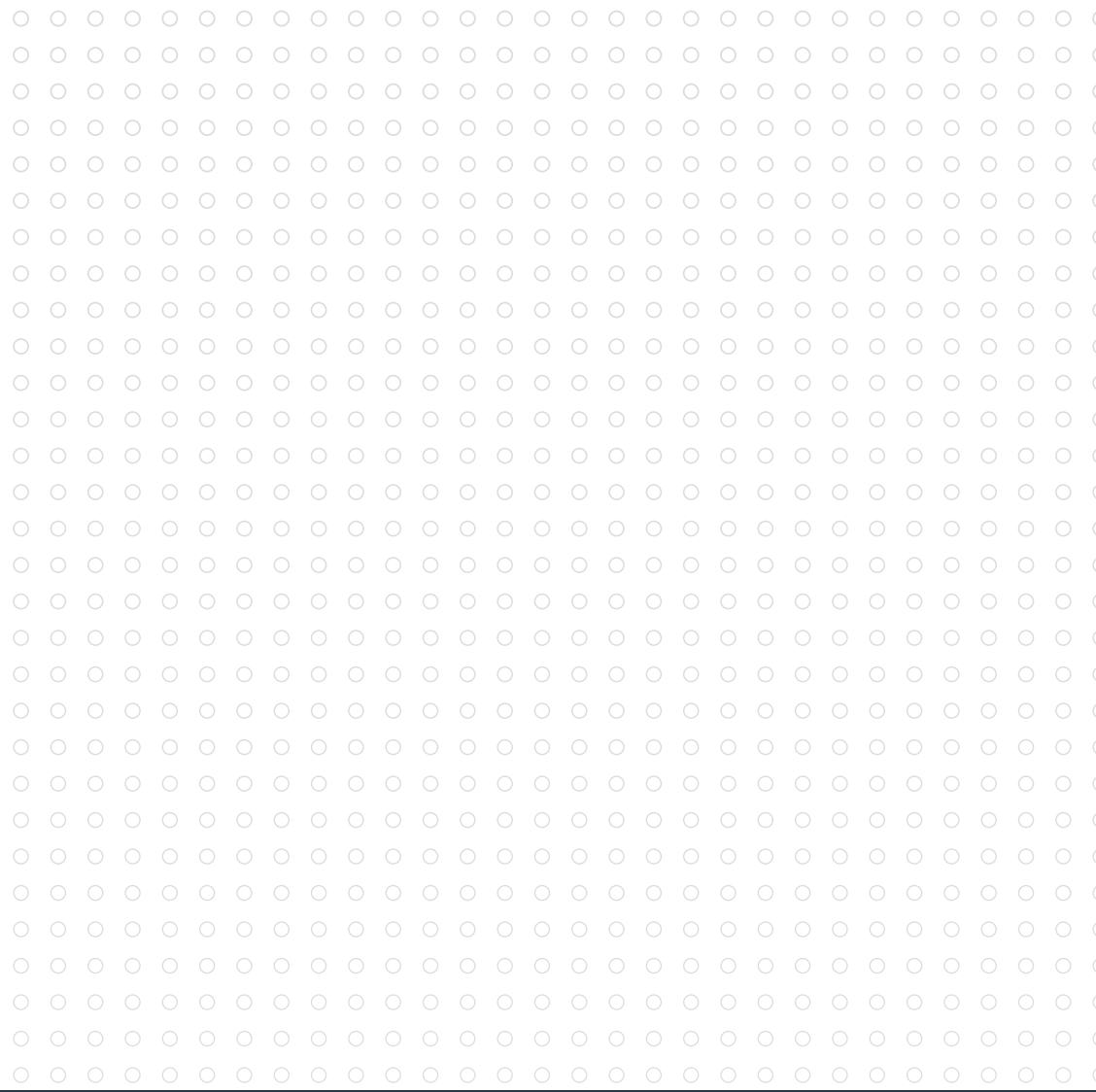
For Phil, his ongoing connection with clients like Brian defines what he loves best about his job at HUB.

“It’s a partnership. RG calls when they want me to come out and look at projects, or even when they just want to ask a question about something. It’s a two-way street,” Phil said.

The feeling is mutual.

**“HUB is more than just an insurance broker; they’re a resource.”**

“HUB is more than just an insurance broker; they’re a resource. They’ve brought solutions to me on more than safety. HUB has been a great partner; they have our relationship at heart, and have a relational-based approach to their customers,” Brian said. “I feel like HUB has my back.”



## Protect what matters most.

When it comes to compliance, we can help you identify your risks, create a plan of action and ensure adherence to ever-changing regulation.