

Lead Safety: Protect Yourself at Work



Lead is a commonly used metal in many different industries. Lead is also one of the most common sources of overexposure and illness in the workplace. If not handled correctly, **lead** dust, fumes, or mist can enter your body through your LUNGS when you breathe or your MOUTH when you swallow. **Too much lead in the body can cause lead poisoning.** Help prevent lead poisoning by practicing "lead safety" while working around lead or lead products. Talk to your employer about the **worker protection program** to reduce your exposure to lead. Make sure to follow the program policies and procedures closely.

Warning signs and symptoms of possible lead poisoning include: extra tiredness or weakness, loss of appetite, a metal taste in the mouth, sleeplessness, muscle and joint pain/soreness, stomach pain/discomfort, headache, constipation, weight loss, nausea, small tremors, nervousness or anxiety, irritability, hyperactivity, extra pale skin, numbness, dizziness, anemia. Other effects include: high blood pressure, impotence, infertility, and reduced sex drive. **Often there are NO symptoms, so have your blood tested regularly for lead.**



Protect Your Family From Lead . . . By NOT bringing it home!

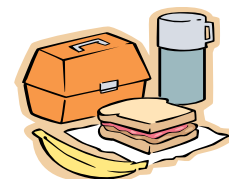
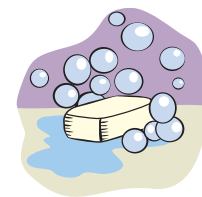
You could bring **lead** dust home to your family without even knowing it! Children are very vulnerable to lead poisoning. Even unborn children are at risk. Here are some ways to protect your family from **lead poisoning**:



- **Store Your Lunch AWAY From Work Areas.** NEVER bring food into work areas.
- **Always Shower BEFORE Leaving Work.** Make sure to clean your fingernails well and always keep them short.
- **Leave ALL Your Work Clothes At Work** with your shoes and other items you wear while working. ONLY bring them home if you are responsible for cleaning them.
- **Keep Contaminated Clothing Separate From ALL Other Clothes.** Make sure to have your work clothes and equipment cleaned correctly. If you take work clothes home to clean, put them in a closed bag/container and wash separately from ALL other clothes.

Safety Tips to Protect Yourself When Working Around Lead

- 1. Always Watch for Hazards:** Tell your supervisor if there are any unsafe conditions or equipment.
- 2. Practice Safe Personal Habits:**
 - Keep hands and objects out and away from your mouth and nose.
 - Don't rub your sleeves against your face or hands.
 - Wash your hands and face well and often with soap and water.
 - Shower at work, if possible, before going home.
 - Always use a clean towel to dry your hands and body.
- 3. Protect Yourself During Breaks and Mealtimes:**
 - Leave work area AND wash your hands and face BEFORE you eat, drink, smoke, or apply cosmetics.
 - Take off Personal Protective Equipment before going into eating and washing areas. Take off your respirator LAST.
 - Store food and drink away from work area and NOT in your locker with contaminated clothing.
 - Smoke ONLY in designated smoking areas.
 - Follow ALL your company's rules and procedures to protect your health.



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4. **Maintain Safe Work Practices:**

- Follow guidelines in keeping all surfaces as free of **lead** as you can. Use vacuums with HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filters. Do NOT use compressed air to clean.
- Use exhaust ventilation or enclosed discharge and collection systems to keep fumes contained in your work area.
- Clean up spills right away.
- Dispose of contaminated wastes correctly.
- Store hazardous materials correctly.
- Don't take shortcuts—always follow recommended ways of doing your job!



5. **Wear All Your Required Clothing:**

- Wear coveralls or full-body work clothing, gloves, a hat, and shoes and/or disposable shoe covers.
- Do NOT try to remove lead by shaking, blowing, or any way that will send it into the air.
- If you are responsible for the care of your work clothes, keep them and wash them SEPARATELY from ALL other clothes.

6. **Use Your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Always use your respirator, face shields, vented goggles and other PPE as required. Always have your equipment ready in case of an unexpected emergency exposure. Be familiar with your employer's worker and respiratory protection programs.

· **Tips For Using Your Respirator**

1. **Use the Right Type** – This depends on the form of lead and its concentration in the air.
2. **Make Sure It Fits Right** – Get fit tested before using your respirator. Get a new fit test if there is a change in your physical condition that could affect respirator fit.
3. **Pay Attention At Training** – Learn about your respirator's weaknesses and how to use it right, so you can reduce your exposure to lead.
4. **Wear Your Respirator** – Always use it when required, even if for a few minutes.
5. **Use Your Own Respirator** – NEVER borrow a respirator or lend yours to anyone. It will NOT fit correctly and exposure to contaminants is likely.
6. **Test It** – Make sure all parts work correctly. Perform a user seal check every time you put it on and before you enter a contaminated area.
7. **Store It Correctly** – When you are not working, store it in a clean and uncontaminated place.
8. **Keep It Ready** – Keep it ready for any unexpected spills, leaks, etc.
9. **Clean and Disinfect It Often** – Disassemble facepiece. Remove filters, cartridges, or canisters. Clean and disinfect each part thoroughly, following federal or manufacturer procedures. Repair or discard any defective part. Do this as often as needed to keep it in a sanitary condition.
10. **Change Cartridges** – Make sure to do this according to the written change schedule.
11. **Report Malfunctions** – Make sure it is fixed RIGHT AWAY.
12. **Replace It When Needed** – Replace the respirator when it malfunctions and cannot be repaired.



If you feel sick, tell your supervisor right away AND see a doctor! However, lead poisoning often has no symptoms, so get your blood tested regularly. Getting involved in a Medical Surveillance Program can help determine whether you are at risk of **lead poisoning**.

For more information about lead poisoning and lead safety, talk to your employer, call your doctor, or contact your local health department or:

Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services

Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

P.O. Box 570, Jefferson City, MO 65109

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