

Lead

List lead hazards on site.

Explain dangers

Exposure to lead is most common among plumbers, welders, painters, and demolition workers.

You're most at risk when there's lead dust, fume, or vapour in the air. For instance, in the following situations:

- Working with lead and metals containing lead such as solder
- Applying or removing paints containing lead
- Installing or removing sheet metal containing lead
- Hot cutting on material containing lead
- Renovating, demolishing, and doing other work on structures or material containing lead
- Removing mortar from stone walls.

Lead gets into your body mainly through

- Inhalation (i.e., breathing in dusts, mists, and fumes)
- Ingestion (i.e., eating, drinking, smoking, biting nails, etc., without first washing your hands and face).

Symptoms of overexposure to lead include

- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Pains in joints and muscles
- Abdominal pain
- Constipation.

Severe lead poisoning may cause much more serious symptoms such as anemia and kidney, nerve, and brain damage. It has also caused miscarriages and stillbirths in pregnant women and reduced sperm count in men.

Identify controls

- Lead is a designated substance under Ontario law. It requires special precautions and handling procedures. Your employer **must** inform you about any lead on a jobsite.
- If you're unsure about the presence of lead or you suspect that there's lead in places where you weren't warned about, tell your employer.
- If you're welding, cutting, burning, or heating products containing lead, make sure you have local exhaust ventilation.
- On power tools that can generate lead-containing dust, use dust-collection systems.
- Wear a respirator and protective clothing. Protective clothing includes coveralls, gloves, and eye protection such as safety glasses, goggles, or face shields.
- Change out of work clothes and shoes at the end of each shift and leave them at work.
- Never take protective clothing home for washing or cleaning. You could poison your family.
- Practice a high standard of personal hygiene—wash up thoroughly after each exposure to lead. Wash and shower at the end of a shift.
- Do not eat, drink, smoke, or chew gum in places that may have lead contamination.
- Get rid of any lead waste at the end of each day or shift in an appropriate manner.

Demonstrate

Explain the site-specific lead control measures on the project with your crew.

Review the section on lead in IHSA's Respirator Selection Chart in Chapter 15 of the *Construction Health and Safety Manual* (M029) and make sure they have the proper PPE for the tasks assigned.