

TOOLBOX TALK #24

Lead Hazards

Prepare: Quiet location? No distractions? Talk aids ready?

Reason: All persons who work with lead must be aware of the dangers.

Why: Lead is a poison, exposure to which must be controlled.

Outline: This talk will cover the effects of lead on the body, the methods of controlling exposure and the sources of exposure.



The effects of lead

- Lead has long been known to be a poison (toxic).
- Uncontrolled exposure can cause headache, tiredness, irritability, nausea etc.
- Continued exposure could cause damage to kidneys, nerves and brain.
- Female operatives of childbearing age should be particularly protected from uncontrolled exposure to lead.
- Handling clean sheet lead is regarded as low risk; it is generally when lead is heated, cut, abraded or becomes old and powdery that the risks to health increase.

Q: Why is it important to control exposure to lead?

Control Of Exposure

- Employers have a legal duty to prevent or control exposure to lead.
- Lead can enter the body by inhalation, ingestion, or skin contact.
- If working with lead, your employer must inform you of the risks to your health and the control measures to be applied.
- You may have to wear RPE to protect against lead fumes vapour or dust.
- After working with lead, wash contaminated skin before eating or drinking.

NOTES

For more information

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- Never eat, drink, or smoke in areas in which work with lead is carried out.
- If you work with lead, you may have to have your blood or urine tested periodically to determine your exposure.

Q: What is the most likely route of lead entry into the body resulting from your work?

Sources of Exposure

- High temperature processes such as smelting, burning or welding.
- Demolition or restoration work involving old lead or lead painted structures.
- Cutting of lead with disc cutters.
- Burning off of old lead based paints.
- Spray painting with lead based paints

Q: What activities do you carry out that may expose you to lead?

- Work where lead is heated to lower temperatures (such as plumbing and soldering) and work involving handling clean sheet lead are regarded as lower risk activities, but still may require control measures to be put in place.

Q: Who has the responsibilities for your health and safety?

Do you have any questions for me?

Sources: [Construction hazardous substances: Lead - HSE](#) [Control of lead at work \(Third edition\) - HSE](#)

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