



MARYLAND

Department of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation

EMPLOYEE LEAD IN CONSTRUCTION FACT SHEET

Lead is a toxic substance that may enter the body by breathing or swallowing lead dusts, fumes or mists. If food, cigarettes, or your hands have lead on them, lead may be swallowed while eating, drinking or smoking. Once in the body, lead enters the bloodstream and may be carried to all parts of the body. The body can eliminate some of this lead, but if there is continued lead stored lead may cause irreversible damage to cells, organs and whole body systems. After exposure stops, it takes months or even years for all lead to be removed from the body.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Exposure to lead may affect each person differently. Even before symptoms appear, lead may cause unseen injury to the body. During early stages of lead poisoning, mild symptoms may be overlooked as everyday medical complaints, including:

*Loss of appetite
Trouble sleeping
Irritability
Fatigue*

*Joint and muscle aches
Decreased sex drive
Lack of concentration*

*Metallic taste
Moodiness
Headache*

Brief intense exposure or prolonged overexposure may result in severe damage to your blood-forming, nervous, urinary and reproductive systems. Some noticeable medical problems include:

*Stomach pains
Wrist or foot drop
High blood pressure*

*Convulsions or seizures
Constipation or diarrhea
Nausea*

*Tremors
Anemia*

WHAT PROTECTION DO I HAVE?

The Lead in Construction Standard 29 CFR 1926.62 with Maryland Amendments is designed to protect you if you are exposed to lead on the job. The permissible exposure limit for airborne lead is an 8-hour time weighted average of 50 ug/m³ (micrograms per cubic meter of air). However, the permissible exposure limit is lower if your workday exceeds 8 hours.

Regardless of your exposure, your employer is required to do the following:

- inform you of the hazards of lead
- provide hand washing facilities
- provide clean protective clothing where skin or eye irritation exists
- provide you with a respirator when you want one

MOSH Training & Education ■ 312 Marshall Avenue, Suite 600 ■ Laurel, MD 20707
Telephone: (410) 880-4970 or (301) 483-8406 ■ Fax: (301) 483-8332

Exposure at or above 30 ug/m³ (the action level) requires the following:

- periodic air monitoring
- periodic testing of the level of lead in your blood
- medical examinations and consultations
- removal from exposure, with your wages and benefits protected, when your blood lead level exceeds 50 ug/dl
- more detailed training

Additionally, exposure in excess of the permissible exposure limit requires:

- engineering and work practice controls to minimize exposure
- properly selected and fitted respiratory protection
- clean protective clothing
- clean change areas
- showers (where feasible)

HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM OVEREXPOSED?

Your employer is required to assess your exposure whenever you may be exposed to lead. However, until your employer demonstrates otherwise, MOSH presumes that you are exposed in excess of the permissible exposure limit if you:

- spray paint with lead paint
- use lead containing mortar
- engage in lead burning
- or perform any of the following activities where lead containing coatings or paint are present:
 - manual demolition of structures
 - manual scraping
 - manual sanding
 - heat gun applications
 - power tool cleaning
 - rivet busting
 - welding
 - cutting
 - torch burning
 - abrasive blasting
 - cleanup activities where dry expendable abrasives are used
 - abrasive blasting enclosure movement and removal

This fact sheet is intended to highlight the major aspects of the Lead in Construction Standard and is not to be interpreted as the complete requirements under the standard, for a complete copy of the standard contact MOSH Training & Education at (410) 880-4970 or (301) 483-8406.