

## Working with Inorganic Lead

Occupational Safety and Health Division

### Working with Inorganic Lead

Lead is a very poisonous chemical that affects many parts of the body e.g. brain, nerves, kidney, blood and abdomen. Lead can enter your body when lead fumes or dust is breathed in and when smoking and eating food with lead contaminated hands.



**Lead poisoning** occurs when too much lead enters the body. Early signs and symptoms include tiredness, giddiness, abdominal discomfort and weakness of the limbs. Children with lead exposure may develop behavioral changes and learning problems.

### How to stay healthy

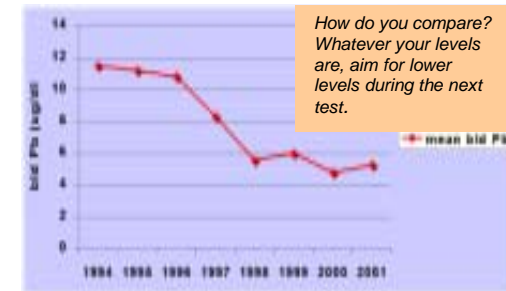
In order to protect your health and prevent lead poisoning, you need to undergo regular medical examinations. Workers who are exposed to lead are required under the law to go for pre-employment and 6-monthly blood test. The blood test will tell you how much lead has entered your body.

### Know your blood lead levels

For females, the blood lead level should not be more than 30 mcg/dl. For males, it should not be more than 50 mcg/dl.

Females have a lower safe level so as to protect the unborn child. For female workers who are pregnant or breast-feeding, inform your supervisor so that you can be transferred to work in a non-lead work area.

### Mean Blood Lead Levels of lead-exposed workers in Singapore



Everyone working with lead must follow strict safe working procedures to reduce the risk of breathing or swallowing lead so that your blood lead level is as low as possible.

- Wash your dirty work clothes in the factory. Do not bring your dirty work clothes home to wash.

### Tips to Avoid Breathing in Lead



- Wear a suitable respirator if there is lead fume or dust. Keep it clean and sealed in an airtight container or plastic bag when not in use.
- Switch on the local exhaust ventilation system if available.
- Do not use compressed air to blow dust off from your work clothes or personal protective equipment.
- Clean your work area regularly by wet mopping or vacuuming. Do not sweep using a broom.

- Know which products contain lead. Burning, welding, flame cutting or melting materials with lead products (e.g. some paints) can produce high levels of lead fumes.
- If heating of metallic lead is carried out, avoid overheating.



\*Signage from Worksafe, WA



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