

Looking after yourself

In Port Pirie, all work has some level of lead-risk due to the presence of lead contamination in buildings and the environment. Many workers are at risk of being exposed to lead at work which can harm the body's systems. There is no safe level of exposure to lead.

Workers can get an elevated blood lead level after a single exposure to a high dose of lead. Still, more commonly, lead builds up in the body after repeated exposure to small amounts, often without apparent symptoms.

Lead enters the body when workers swallow or inhale lead dust or fumes, which is transported around the body through the bloodstream. This can occur during processes such as:

- > Lead paint removal
- > Radiator repairs or recycling vehicle batteries
- > Machine sanding, abrasive blasting, grinding, soldering, welding or cutting lead materials
- > Contaminated carpet removal

When handling lead-containing materials such as:

- > Dust in ceiling, wall and floor cavities
- > Electronics
- > Soil and paint
- > Lubricants, solder, glazing compounds, and plastic resins
- > Ammunition, inks and dyes
- > Flashings and shielding materials

Through occupations such as:

- > Mining/Smelting industry
- > Electricians
- > Plumbers
- > Tilers
- > Mechanics
- > Automotive/boat repairers
- > Gardeners/landscapers
- > Builders

You and your employer must comply with work health and safety legislation and occupational exposure standards for lead (airborne lead in the workplace and blood monitoring). There are specific requirements for women of reproductive age due to the lead risks for unborn babies.

Protect yourself by:

- > Monitoring your lead exposure levels by blood testing (discuss with your employer and GP)
- > Following lead-aware work practices to prevent and reduce lead dust and fumes
- > Wearing appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and follow work hygiene practices

For information about these laws and your legal responsibilities relating to lead risk work contact SafeWork SA on 1300 365 255 or visit www.safework.sa.gov.au

Looking after your family

Lead-risk work can also put your family at risk of lead exposure.

Workplace visits by young children and pregnant women should be discouraged.

Children and pregnant women are at most risk from lead. Children absorb more lead into their bodies and their developing brain, and nervous system are more vulnerable than adults. There is evidence that high lead levels in pregnant women can increase the risk of complications during pregnancy.

It is likely that you will bring lead-contaminated dust into your home and car from work on your clothes, hair, skin, bags, shoes, and other work items. This transfer is called take-home lead.

Protect your family from **take-home lead** by:

- > Avoid taking home items, equipment, work clothes and shoes or vehicles used at worksites
- > Wiping personal items taken to work such as mobile phones, drink bottles, lunch boxes, work bags and car keys often and keep items away from children
- > Making sure you have showered, washed your hair and changed into clean clothes and shoes before interacting with your family (ideally use washing facilities at work)
- > Don't do activities that will re-contaminate you and your clothing once you are clean
- > Don't go home for lunch in work clothing
- > Washing and storing work clothes and shoes separately from other family members clothes, bed linen and towels

- > Keeping your vehicle windows and vents closed, and wash and clean your vehicle (especially baby/child car seats) regularly if you have to use your personal vehicle for work
- > Keeping baby/child car seats and any baby/child items out of your work vehicle

If you are worried that your family has been exposed to lead, you should talk to the Environmental Health Centre or your GP about blood lead testing.

Looking after the community

Lead-risk work can also put the community at risk if appropriate action is not taken to prevent and minimise the spread of airborne lead dust and lead-containing materials such as contaminated soil waste and building materials, e.g. carpets.

Protect the community by:

- > Using lead-aware work practices that prevent and minimise, generating and spreading lead dust particles such as wet sanding, HEPA vacuuming and never using blower vacs
- > Securing, covering and disposing of all lead-containing building materials and worksite waste directly to the local waste transfer station. Do not supply or sell to others or discard in skip bins
- > Using water to mist or dampen down work areas to suppress dust

- > Sealing off work areas using plastic and tape (cover floors, doors, windows and openings) to contain dust, so it doesn't spread throughout the building and to neighbouring properties.
- > Scheduling dust-generating work, e.g. roadworks, earthmoving, demolitions, for safer weather conditions (not windy)
- > Always covering vehicle/trailer loads.

Contact the local council to discuss dust management requirements before you start and remember:

Plan, Prepare, Protect and Clean Up.

For more information

Environmental Health Centre
117 Gertrude Street
PORT PIRIE SA 5540
Telephone: 8638 4100

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/ehc

Confidentiality (caveat if required)-I#-A#



www.ausgoal.gov.au/creative-commons

Lead Aware in the Workplace

For Industry and Tradespeople
working in Port Pirie



Environmental
Health Centre



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