

Lead in Old Paint

About 9 minutes to deliver

Torching, sanding or grinding old paint puts lead in the air and on your hands — and the person it hurts most may be a child at home.

Paint on anything built before 1978 should be assumed to contain lead until it is tested. Steel structures, bridges, plant, window frames, radiators, doors, handrails — and layers under later coats.

Intact paint is not the hazard. What you do to it is.

THE TASKS THAT RELEASE IT

1926.62 lists them because they reliably put lead in your breathing zone:

- torch or flame cutting, burning, welding on lead-coated steel — the worst of them by a distance
- abrasive blasting
- power tool cleaning — grinding, needle gunning, sanding
- dry manual scraping and sanding
- demolition of structures with lead paint

The exposure limit is 50 micrograms per cubic metre over eight hours, and if you work more than eight, the allowable average drops — 400 divided by the hours you work.

WHAT IT DOES

Lead accumulates. It does not leave when the job does. It causes high blood pressure, kidney damage, nerve damage, anaemia, and fertility problems in both men and women. There is no level known to be safe for a child.

HOW IT GETS INTO YOU

- Breathing it — fume from hot work, dust from grinding and sanding.
- Swallowing it — hands to a sandwich, a cigarette, a bottle of water. This route matters more than people think, and it is the one you fully control.

CONTROLS, IN ORDER

- Do not make dust and fume. Chemical stripping, wet methods, shrouded tools with HEPA extraction, a licensed contractor for the big work.
- Contain it. Sheeting, and nobody unprotected inside the area.
- Respirator and coveralls where exposure is expected — and a respirator means fit tested, which is a different talk and a real requirement.
- Never dry sweep or use compressed air. HEPA vacuum or wet methods only.

DO NOT TAKE IT HOME

This is the part that matters most.

- Wash hands and face before eating, drinking or smoking. Every time.
- Change out of work clothes and boots before you get in the vehicle, and do not wash them with the family laundry.
- Never eat, drink or smoke in the work area.

If you have been on lead work, blood lead monitoring is available. It is a simple test and it tells you something nothing else will.

ASK THE CREW

- What are we about to cut, burn or grind, and do we know what is on it?
- Where do people eat lunch on this job, and where do they wash first?
- Is anybody taking work clothes home in the truck?

29 CFR 1926.62

This is a toolbox talk, not a course. It is general awareness on one topic — not site-specific, not a hazard assessment, and not a substitute for assessment of your workplace by a competent person, your written programs, or manufacturers' instructions. It does not by itself satisfy any OSHA training requirement. Regulations change; verify against the current standard. Whoever delivers it is responsible for deciding it is suitable and sufficient for the work. Where a talk covers first aid, resuscitation, or mental health it is general safety information, not medical advice, not a substitute for professional medical care or certified emergency-response training, and it confers no certification — in an emergency, call 911. Free to print and use, as is, with no warranty of any kind. Migna Safety Solutions · training.mignasafety.com

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ATTENDANCE RECORD

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Date

Job / site

Delivered by

Company

#	Print name	Signature	Date
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I delivered this talk and determined it was suitable for this crew and this work.

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