

# LEAD

## How Lead Exposures Can Happen

If lead exposure is a possibility in your job, it is important that you understand how exposure occurs. This way you can take steps to lower your chances of being exposed

**You can be exposed by breathing-in lead fumes or lead dust.**

Lead fumes are produced during metal processing, when metal is being heated or soldered. Lead dust is produced when metal is being cut or when lead paint is sanded or removed with a heat gun. Lead fumes and lead dust do not have an odor, so you may not know you are being exposed.

**You can be exposed by ingesting lead dust.**

Lead dust can settle on food, water, clothes, and other objects. If you eat, drink, or smoke in areas where lead is being processed or stored, you could ingest lead dust. Not washing your hands before you eat or touch your mouth are also ways you could ingest lead.

**You can be exposed by coming in contact with lead dust.**

Some studies have found lead can be absorbed through skin. If you handle lead and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, you could be exposed. Lead dust can also get on your clothes and your hair. If this happens, it's possible that you may track home some of the lead dust, which may also expose your family.

## How You Can Keep Yourself and Your Family Safe from Lead

- Eat and/or drink in areas where lead-containing products are not being handled or processed.
- Shower and change your clothes and shoes after working around lead-based products. This will keep lead dust from being tracked through your home, which will lower the chance of your family being exposed.
- Work in areas that are well-ventilated.
- Wear the proper personal protective equipment (PPE), such as goggles, gloves, boots, and protective clothing, to prevent contact while working around lead and lead dust.
- If you are concerned that you are being exposed to lead or another workplace hazard, contact the safety office at [safety@nps.edu](mailto:safety@nps.edu)