



# Lead Exposure

*Removing old paint or other materials that contain lead by blasting with abrasives, sanding, loosening or cutting with a torch, or scraping can create lead fumes and dust. The lead dust can be breathed in and can settle on your clothes and hands. It can get into food, drink, and anything else you touch. It can be carried away from the job on clothing, lunch pails, and shoes. Lead dust that stays on your' clothes can harm the people you live with, especially children. Coming into contact with lead (called lead exposure) can seriously damage the lungs, brain, liver, and other parts of the body.*

## Diego's Story

Diego was removing lead paint on a highway bridge project. After a few months on the job, he went to the hospital. Diego had been vomiting, losing weight, and having trouble concentrating. The doctor told Diego he had high levels of lead in his blood.

- ✘ What could have been done to prevent exposure to lead while working?
- ✘ Have you ever had any of the same symptoms during a job?
- ✘ If so, did a doctor check your blood for lead?

## Remember This

- OSHA requires employers to protect you from lead by providing you with training, the right tools, and personal protective equipment. If you work around high levels of lead, they must also have your blood tested for lead.
- **Never** blast, sand, or cut with a torch any surfaces that may contain lead until they have been tested for lead. OSHA has a standard for lead in construction work.
- If the surface contains lead, your employer should provide you with a vacuum attachment for your equipment to capture the dust.
- When using a chemical paint stripper, read the label and use the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE), such as
  - Coveralls or other full-body work clothing
  - Gloves
  - Disposable shoe covers
  - Vented goggles or a face shield with goggles
  - A respirator
- Wash your hands and face before eating, drinking, or using tobacco. **Never** eat, drink, or use tobacco in the work area.



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- ✘ Never blast, sand, or cut with a torch any surfaces that may contain lead until it has been tested for lead.
- ✘ Wash your hands and face before eating, drinking, or using tobacco.
- ✘ Do not eat, drink, or use tobacco products in the work area.
- ✘ Use a vacuum attachment, follow product instructions, and wear PPE when you might come into contact with lead.