



Removal from lead work – Management of workers

When should a worker be removed from lead work?

All workers who work in lead-risk work are required to have regular blood tests for lead as part of the health surveillance requirements.

Health surveillance must be supervised by an Appointed Medical Practitioner. It is mandatory that results consistent with exposure are reported promptly to WorkSafe.

Removal from lead work is triggered at different levels for men and women depending on their circumstances. Men with blood lead levels of 30 µg/dL or higher;

- Women who are not of reproductive capacity share the same removal levels as men, ie 30 µg/dL;
- Women of reproductive capacity with blood lead level of 10 µg/dL or higher;
- Women who are breast feeding or pregnant must be removed from lead risk work

The employer must remove the worker from lead-risk work as soon as practical after being made aware of the blood lead level results or the pregnancy or breast feeding status.

The employer must also arrange for the worker to be examined by an Appointed Medical Practitioner within 7 days of removal. The outcome of the examination should be provided to WorkSafe.

When can the worker return to lead-risk work?

The employer must not permit the worker to return to lead-risk work until the worker has been examined by an Appointed

Medical Practitioner and certified as suitable to return to lead-risk work. This will be determined on the basis of the medical condition, including follow up lead levels.

Who is responsible for the cost of the medical examination and tests for potential lead health effects?

The employer is responsible for all medical costs.

Can the worker work at all?

In the absence of any significant adverse health effects, the worker may continue to work. The worker cannot work in lead-risk tasks or lead-exposed areas to prevent further absorption of lead.

What records must I keep for workers who have been removed from lead-risk work?

For each worker who has been removed and returned to lead-risk work, you must document:

- (a) the worker's name, sex and date of birth; and
- (b) the date of each occasion of removal, the blood lead levels, and corresponding date of return to lead-risk work.

The employer must keep the records for the duration of the worker's employment and for at least 30 years from the date of the last entry.

If the organisation ceases to operate in WA, the employer must provide the records to WorkSafe.

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Laws on blood lead levels have changed

On 1 October 2019, amendments to the Occupational Safety and Health Regulations 1996 (OSH Regulations) came into effect. The amendments lowered the blood lead removal level thresholds for workers and changed the definition of 'lead-risk job', as per the table below:

Regulation 5.53: lead-risk job	Amended WA OSH Regulations
<p>Work carried out in a lead process that is likely to cause the blood level of a worker carrying out work to exceed:</p> <p>(a) in the case of females of reproductive capacity, at least:</p> <p>(b) in any other case, at least:</p>	<p>5 µg/dL</p> <p>20 µg/dL</p>
Regulation 5.63(1)(a)	Amended WA OSH Regulations
<p>An employer must ensure that an employee is removed from a lead-risk job to a job that is not a lead-risk job, if the employee's blood level is at or above:</p> <p>(i) in the case of females of reproductive capacity, at least:</p> <p>(ii) in any other case:</p>	<p>10 µg/dL</p> <p>30 µg/dL</p>

Removal of Workers from Lead-Risk Work

