

Construction Hazards: Metals (Dusts and Fumes)

	Source	Health Effects
Cadmium, Chromium, Copper, Zinc, Magnesium	Welding operations; drilling, cutting and sawing pipes; scraping rust or coatings.	<p>Short Term: Metal dusts can be irritating to skin, nose, eyes and lungs. Effects of fumes differ depending on metal (see MSDS). Some metals (such as zinc, copper, and magnesium) cause metal fume fever (flue-like symptoms with fever, nausea, chills and muscular aches and pains).</p> <p>Long Term: Depends on metal (see MSDS). Cadmium and chromium can cause cancer.</p>
Lead	Cable splicing, demolition, remodeling, painting, pipe fitting, plumbing, roofing, sheetmetal, iron work; welding on lead or surfaces with lead-containing paint or coatings; brass foundlings may release lead.	<p>Short Term: Very rare (only if exposure is high). Symptoms similar to long term effects.</p> <p>Long Term: Damage to brain and nerves (tremors, muscular weakness, lack of coordination), damage to reproductive systems (men and women), stomach problems, anemia, damage to kidneys.</p>

Controls for Metal Fumes:

Avoid welding on toxic metals or coatings; brush or scrub off coatings. Natural or general ventilation is often adequate in open areas. Position yourself so that fumes don't blow into your face. Provide local exhaust ventilation in small or confined spaces. Respirators should be worn when ventilation or other controls are not possible.

Lead: Shower or change clothes to avoid bringing lead home to your family.