

## California Department of Public Health Adult (Occupational) Blood Lead Registry

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### ***Reporting Requirements***

Legislation in 1986 created a statewide system for tracking lead poisoning cases in children and adults in California (California Health and Safety Code Section 124130). **Laboratories are required to report electronically all blood lead levels (BLLs) for persons tested in California to the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).** Information on the **person** tested, their **employer**, the **provider** ordering the test, the **analyzing laboratory**, and the **result** are reported to CDPH. BLLs 10 µg/dL or greater must be reported within three (3) working days; BLLs less than 10 µg/dL must be reported within 30 calendar days.

For the system to be effective, information on the individual (birth date, home address, name and address of employer) must be obtained at the time the blood specimen is collected and must be reported to the analyzing laboratory (see Page 4). Medical providers ordering BLL tests and referring laboratories should ensure that complete information is gathered and forwarded to the analyzing laboratory with the blood sample.

### ***OLPPP's Mandates***

The Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (OLPPP) was established by the 1991 Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Act (California Health and Safety Code §105185 - 105195). Mandated activities include the following:

- maintaining the Adult Blood Lead Registry;
- investigating reported cases of occupational lead poisoning to ensure that workers receive appropriate medical care, that workplace hazards are corrected, and that household members at risk for "take-home" exposure are identified and referred to the local health department;
- investigating cases where children or family members of workers are poisoned by lead brought home from the workplace ("take-home" exposure);
- educating employers, employees and health professionals about prevention of occupational lead poisoning; and
- making recommendations for the prevention of lead poisoning.

### ***Case Investigation and Management***

OLPPP investigates reports for adults aged 16 and over who are occupationally exposed to lead and provides in-depth case management for workers with seriously elevated BLLs and take-home exposures. Case management for children under 21 years and for non-occupationally exposed adults (to the extent resources allow) is done by the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch (CLPPB) in CDPH and local health departments' Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (CLPP) Programs.

### ***Blood Lead Level Reports***

OLPPP requires complete patient, employer, physician, sample and laboratory information. Missing information is obtained by contacting the laboratory, the medical provider or the employer. BLLs 40 µg/dL or greater are verified for occupational exposure and immediately investigated by OLPPP. Reports for non-occupational adult cases are forwarded to CLPPB.

## **OLPPP Case Investigation and Management Protocols**

### **1) Workers with BLL of 50 µg/dL or greater**

The worker, employer, and physician are interviewed by phone using standardized questionnaires as outlined below:

#### **Worker**

OLPPP contacts the worker to address his or her concerns about the BLL report, ask about lead health effects, to learn about the workplace and work practices, to educate about working safely with lead, and to identify household members and co-workers at risk. A packet of information is mailed to the worker's home. Names of any children under six years old or pregnant/nursing women in the household are forwarded to CLPPB for follow-up by the local health department.

If the worker's BLL is less than 80 µg/dL and the test is not employer-sponsored, consent is obtained from the worker to contact the employer. Worker and co-worker BLLs continue to be monitored via the Adult Blood Lead Registry.

#### **Employer**

OLPPP contacts the employer and conducts an initial interview. Some employers are selected for in-depth case management, including an onsite visit from OLPPP staff. OLPPP provides a review of the company's lead safety measures, specific recommendations for improvement, and a timeline for completion of the recommendations.

A company not selected for in-depth case management will either be referred to Cal/OSHA Compliance or given the opportunity to enlist the assistance of the Cal/OSHA Consultation service.

Where the Cal/OSHA lead standards require Medical Removal Protection (MRP)\*, OLPPP ensures that the worker is removed immediately from further lead exposure, and that the worker receives proper follow-up medical care and full medical removal protection benefits. OLPPP is not an enforcement or regulatory agency.

#### **Physician**

Physicians who provide care for workers with BLLs 50 µg/dL or greater are contacted by OLPPP to review the case and to provide information and assistance.

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\***Medical Removal Protection (MRP)** is the temporary removal from lead work to protect the health of the worker. The Cal/OSHA lead standards require that an employer must remove a worker from his or her usual work with lead under two conditions:

- A)** the worker has a *seriously elevated blood lead level [BLL 50 µg/dL or greater under the Lead in Construction Standard; single BLL 60 µg/dL or greater or average BLL 50 µg/dL or greater under the General Industry Lead Standard];*
- B)** whenever a physician determines a worker has symptoms associated with lead toxicity or a medical condition that places him or her at increased health risk.

The physician may allow the worker, if physically able, to work in an area or task where air lead levels are less than 30 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. If such work is not available, the worker must receive full salary and benefits while off work. MRP is a medical decision.

## **OLPPP Case Investigation and Management Protocols (continued)**

### **2) Suspected or Confirmed Take-Home Exposure**

If a child and a worker in a household each have a BLL 10 µg/dL or greater and a workplace source of lead has been identified, a take-home investigation is conducted. OLPPP interviews the identified worker and then the employer to review worker hygiene measures necessary to prevent carrying lead dust home and may assess other improvements needed in the lead safety program. Every effort is made to protect the identity of the worker if there is concern about reprisal. The local health department evaluates the home situation, assists with blood lead testing for household members and medical follow-up as needed, and educates the family about cleanup of lead contamination in the home and prevention measures.

OLPPP informs the employer about the requirements of the Cal/OSHA lead standards and recommends BLL testing for all workers who may be exposed to lead. The workers are advised to have their children tested for lead and given resource information. OLPPP makes specific recommendations to the employer for correcting identified workplace hazards including the practices that resulted in lead being carried home by the workers. Failure by the employer to adequately address OLPPP's recommendations or evidence of significant workplace lead safety hazards may result in a referral to Cal/OSHA for enforcement action.

### **3) Workers with BLLs 10 to 49 µg/dL**

For adults with California addresses and BLLs 10 to 39 µg/dL, OLPPP sends a letter covering sources of lead exposure, health effects, "take-home" lead exposure, and employer responsibilities. Contact information for the county health department is given for assistance with blood lead testing for children in the home or other concerns.

In addition, OLPPP sends workers with BLLs 40 to 49 µg/dL a letter and packet of information on lead poisoning and how to prevent it, lead hazards, take-home exposure, employer responsibilities, and resources regarding worker legal rights. If the BLL was not done as part of an employer-sponsored medical program, OLPPP requests the worker's consent before sending a similar letter and packet of educational materials to the employer. Clinicians are sent a letter and packet of information on a one-time basis.

### **4) Two BLLs 15 µg/dL or greater, or one BLL 20 µg/dL or greater, aged 16 to 21 years**

Case follow-up for elevated BLL associated with occupational exposure or exposure of unknown origin is conducted by local health department CLPP Programs in collaboration with OLPPP.

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For more information, contact us:

#### **Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**

Occupational Health Branch

California Department of Public Health

**850 Marina Bay Parkway**

**Building P, 3rd Floor**

**Richmond, CA 94804**

(866) 627-1587 (toll-free number for California callers)

(510) 620-5743 (fax)

**This protocol and other helpful information are available on our website:**

**[www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb)**

## Lab Requisition for Blood Lead Testing (Sample)

Health care providers ordering blood lead level (BLL) tests can fill out this sheet and attach it to the Lab Requisition Form.

### A. Patient Information

Last Name	First Name	M.I.	
		Male	Female
Date of Birth	Age (Years)		
Patient Address (number, street)		Apt. Number	
City			
State	ZIP Code	Telephone Number	Social Security Number (voluntary)
First and Last Name of Parent or Guardian (if person tested is a minor)			

### B. Employer Information (Employer of the person tested, at the time of the test)

Name of Employer	Self-Employed	Not Employed	
Employer Address (number, street)		Suite Number	
City			
State	ZIP Code	Telephone Number	Fax

### C. Ordering Health Care Provider

Name of Provider Group, Clinic or Facility				
	MD	DO	NP	PA
First and Last Name of Individual Health Care Provider				
Provider Address (number, street)		Suite Number		
City				
State	ZIP Code	Telephone Number	Fax	