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Welcome to the 1st electronic edition of *Occupational Health Watch*, an update of recent activities of the California Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Branch (OH B).

Focus on...

New Health Dangers from Lead

New scientific evidence reveals that levels of lead once thought harmless are in fact toxic and can cause permanent damage to health. Low levels of lead in adults can cause increased blood pressure, decreased brain and kidney function, and harm to the physical and mental development of a baby before it is born. Scientists and doctors are now recommending that adult blood lead levels be kept below 10 µg/dL. This blood lead level is well below the 40 µg/dL at which OSHA currently requires employers to take action.

In response to this new information, the Occupational Health Branch has written a health hazard alert for workers (English and Spanish), developed comprehensive health-based guidelines for physicians on providing care for lead-exposed workers, and supported the publication of a report by University of California Berkeley on policy options to be considered to respond to the recent science. OH B has also produced a bilingual English-Spanish lead and ladder safety training DVD for painters. For more on these new items:

Workplace Hazard Alert: New Health Dangers from Lead
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/olppp/Documents/LeadHazAlert.pdf

Alerta – Peligro del Trabajo: Nuevos Peligros del Plomo
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/olppp/Documents/LeadHazAlertSpan.pdf

Medical Guidelines for the Lead-Exposed Worker
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/olppp/Documents/medgdln.pdf

Indecent Exposure: Lead Puts Workers and Families at Risk, Health Research for Action, UCB,
Perspectives
www.healthresearchforaction.org/perspectives/occupational-lead-exposure.pdf

Lead's Revenge! ¡La Venganza del Plomo!
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/olppp/Pages/New.aspx#venganza

The Occupational Health Branch in the California Department of Public Health is devoted to improving worker health and safety through prevention activities. We gather information on job hazards, work with others to try out new approaches to prevent worker injury and illness, and provide information to assist people in making changes at the workplace. For more information, visit our website:
www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohb.

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