

**Focus on...**

Lead Still a Health Concern for California Workers

A new report from the [California Occupational Blood Lead Registry](#) shows that thousands of California workers are still being exposed to lead and have elevated blood lead levels. These workers are at risk for significant long-term health effects.



Photo: Workers pour molten metal at a foundry

In some industries where lead is a hazard, such as painting work that disturbs lead paint, very few employers provide mandated blood lead testing. Despite this limitation, the data we collect provide valuable information. For example, workers with Hispanic surnames are disproportionately represented among workers with elevated blood lead levels, suggesting that Hispanic workers may be more likely to be exposed to lead on the job.

In addition, among those who test, employers in some industries are more successful than others in protecting their workforce from lead on the job, as evidenced by the lower blood lead levels of their workers.

For other data highlights, see the full report: [Blood lead levels in California workers, 2008-2011](#).

Improvements in the Cal/OSHA lead regulations (known as “Standards”) could enhance workplace protections, as well as address the critical issue of under-testing. Cal/OSHA has initiated an advisory committee process for revising its two Lead Standards. CDPH staff are actively participating in this process.

Resources

[Blood lead levels in California workers, 2008-2011](#)
[Recommendations for improving the Cal/OSHA Lead Standards Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program](#)

OHB improves California worker health and safety through prevention activities. We gather information on job hazards, test new approaches to prevent worker injury and illness, and help make changes at the workplace.

Email OHW@cdph.ca.gov with feedback about this update or change of address.