

# Lead safe recreation: Lead from bullet reloading



- You can be exposed to lead fumes and lead dust while melting, casting, tumbling, and reloading bullets. Lead fumes and lead dust have no odor, so you may not know you are being exposed.
- Lead dust can be brought into your home on your hands, hair, and clothes. Lead dust in the home exposes you, your family, and your pets to the harmful effects of lead.
- Lead is especially harmful to children and pregnant women. Lead can damage the brain, nervous system, kidneys, and immune system.

**Lead poisoning is preventable! Protect yourself and your family. There is no safe level of lead.**



## Reduce lead exposure

- Melting lead to cast bullets produces lead fumes that can stay in the air for up to 10 hours. Always use an exhaust fan while casting bullets.
- Dry tumbling casings creates harmful lead dust. Use a wet tumbler or a wetting agent to minimize lead dust. Change the media often to remove toxic lead compounds.
- Protect your family from lead fumes and dust by using a shop area or garage separated from your home to melt or reload bullets. If your work area is attached to your home, separate the work area with plastic sheeting.
- Ventilate your work area. A High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter is recommended to trap lead fumes and dust to prevent them from circulating around the room.

## Keep your work area clean

- Prevent the build-up of lead dust by regularly cleaning your work area. Damp mop hard-surface floors often. Mist walls, ceilings, windowsills, doorjambs, tables, chairs, and equipment with water and wipe with a clean damp cloth or sponge.
- Avoid carpeting in bullet reloading areas. Lead dust in carpet can be difficult to remove. Static electricity from carpet can also cause safety hazards when handling primers.
- Never dry sweep your work area and only use a vacuum cleaner if it has a HEPA filter. Dry sweeping and vacuuming without a HEPA filter may spread lead dust to clean areas.
- If you buy or salvage lead for bullet casting, keep the metal in a container with a tight-fitting lid, such as a coffee can or plastic bucket. Keep the inside of the container slightly moist with a spray bottle to prevent lead dust.
- **Children are especially at risk to the health effects of lead.** Keep loose pieces of lead away from areas where small children could reach them.

## Remove lead from your body and clothing

- Lead dust can settle on your body, hair, shoes, and clothes. Consider wearing a coverall or other outer clothes that you can wash after each use or leave in the work area.
- After handling lead or fired brass, blow your nose and wash your hands and face with soap and water.
- Dry your face and hands with paper or cloth towels. If you use cloth towels, use them only for bullet reloading or shooting activities, and don't mix them with household ones.
- Shower to prevent transferring lead dust in your hair into your home.

## Have your blood lead levels checked

- Contact your health care provider and ask for a simple blood lead level test for you and your family. These tests are covered by Medicaid and most private health insurance.
- There is no safe blood lead level in children. However, a blood lead level above 3.5 micrograms per deciliter (mcg/dL) indicates increased risk of health effects.

## Resources

*Idaho Environmental Health Program's lead page - [healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/IndoorEnvironment/Lead/tabid/941/Default.aspx](http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Health/EnvironmentalHealth/IndoorEnvironment/Lead/tabid/941/Default.aspx)*

*Idaho Fish and Game - Hunting - [idfg.idaho.gov/hunt](http://idfg.idaho.gov/hunt)*

*Bureau of Land Management - [www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-programs/recreational-shooting/idaho](http://www.blm.gov/programs/recreation/recreation-programs/recreational-shooting/idaho)*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - [www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/default.htm)*

*U.S. Environmental Protection Agency - [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)*

### Contact

*Idaho Department of Health and Welfare  
Environmental Health Program*

*[www.environmentalhealth.dhw.idaho.gov](http://www.environmentalhealth.dhw.idaho.gov)*

*[BCEH@dhw.idaho.gov](mailto:BCEH@dhw.idaho.gov)*

*(800) 445-8647*



**Children and pregnant women are most at risk from lead exposure**



**Never eat, drink, or smoke while reloading**



**Remember to stay safe while enjoying your hobby!**



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF  
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