

Lead Solder Factsheet



Lead has adverse effects on almost every organ and system in the body. Exposure to excessive levels has been linked to nervous system complications, brain damage, high blood pressure, digestive problems and both learning and behavioral disorders in adults and children.

Lead can also be released into the air, groundwater and soil throughout its life cycle in processes such as mining, waste treatment and disposal. Once in the environment, lead is persistent (as are all metals) and bio-accumulates in the food chain.

Lead soldering is still common in the plumbing industry, and is used to manufacture most electronic devices.

You can help prevent lead exposure and maintain a safe work environment by:

- Using a less-hazardous solder material whenever possible. There are many safe, reliable, nontoxic, and cost-effective substitute alloys available for lead-bearing solders.
- Solder in a fume hood or well-ventilated area.
- Wash hands before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Manage discarded lead solder, dross and rags as hazardous waste. Placing the material in a plastic bag labeled "Lead Solder Waste." Waste lead solder must be disposed of by Environmental Health and Safety. Complete a [waste removal request](#).
- Keep waste solder containers closed when not adding or removing material.



For more information concerning the proper management and disposal of lead solder waste, please contact Iowa State University Environmental Health and Safety at (515) 294-5359 or via email at EHSinfo@iastate.edu.