Plumbing Safety Meeting Kit



A plumber installs, repairs, and maintains plumbing fixtures or systems in businesses, industries, or residences. The job may include installation and repair of pipes, fittings, and fixtures servicing the water supply, waste disposal, and heating systems. Plumbing is a simple name for a job that has a wide variety of duties.

MAIN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS FOR PLUMBERS

- Exposure to hazardous substances such as: lead.
- Proximity to flammable products.
- Exposure to biohazards including raw sewage.
- Potential infection from bird or rodent droppings.
- Work in awkward positions, risking musculoskeletal injury.
- Lifting heavy or awkward objects.
- Exposure to electricity, extreme temperatures, or noise.
- Working in confined spaces.
- Working at heights (e.g., on platforms/scaffolding or ladders).
- Risk of eye injury from flying particles.
- Slips, trips and falls, especially when working in wet environments.
- Burns from hot equipment parts, steam lines, and the release of hot water or steam.
- Working with hand tools and powered tools.
- Stress.
- Shift work or extended work days.
- Working alone.

WORK-RELATED CANCERS FOR PLUMBERS AND PIPEFITTERS

Plumbers and pipefitters who have been exposed to dusts and other airborne toxins may begin to experience respiratory problems after a few years (or up to 35 years later). Exposure leads to other chronic health problems:

- Brain cancer
- Emphysema
- Gastrointestinal cancer
- Kidney cancer
- Lung cancer

- Lymphomas
- Mesothelioma
- Pleural effusions
- Pleural plaques
- Pleuritis
- Pleural thickening
- Pneumoconiosis

SAFETY TIPS FOR PLUMBERS

- Before each job, study detailed drawings and specifications to be prepared for any difficulties ahead. Make necessary changes to your job plan beforehand.
- Conduct all plumbing activities in a systematic way as outlined in your pre-planning preparations.
- Hand tools are more powerful today than ever before, which comes with risks. Hand tool injuries can include fractures, broken bones, cuts and more. Take care that all hand tools are in good working order.
- Mold infestation is not only a homeowner?s nightmare, but also a plumber?s nightmare, as well. Plumbers may be working in a confined space and exposed to mold in bathrooms, under sinks and in paneling. Keep a look-out.
- Extreme temperature conditions are common for plumbers from frozen pipes to extremely hot spaces, which increase the chance of severe injuries.
- Up to 48% of plumbers have reported hearing loss due to noisy pipes, electronic machinery and banging tools.
- Wear safety glasses at all times to limit this risk and prevent eye damage.
- Millions of people are exposed every year to asbestos, the No. 1 cause of respiratory death. This includes plumbers. Ask the proper owners if the building in which you are working contains asbestos.
- Avoid repetitive work that requires prolonged periods of pushing, pulling or carrying loads. This will help you avoid muscle strains and sprains.
- Use proper scaffolding when plumbing work must be done from a height. Inspect scaffolding for stability and use sufficient care when using ropes/zulas to prevent accidents.
- Coordinate with other agencies to help maintain safety of all workers.
- Check to see if the contractor has a good first-aid kit on site in case of accidents.
- Great training and experience ensure safety at every phase of work and helps avoid accidents.
- Poor lighting and ventilation, especially in narrow shafts or ducts can be hazardous.
- When working in trenches, observe all safety norms to avoid a collapse.
- Use only the proper tools on every job. Old and worn-out tools may lead to more accidents.

FINAL WORD

Plumbers are fully aware of the work involved in making sure pipes, radiators and drains do what they need to do. Do they understand the risks? Even with the best safety planning, working as a plumber comes with plenty of risks.