

Know your hazard:

Chromium

What is chromium?

Chromium metal has been used across the ages in jewellery, ornamental works, car, body trims, and is used to electroplate other steels due to its corrosion-resistant properties.

Chromium is an important component in:

Stainless steel



Non-ferrous metal alloys



Where is chromium used?

Chromium is utilised in different metal production and fabrication and related industrial and commercial product applications, such as:

- 

Welding, cutting, grinding, and casting of stainless steels & other alloys
- 

Chromium plating
- 

Smelting of copper, zinc, and ferrochromium ores
- 

Pigments, dyes, preservatives, ceramics and portland cement
- 

Specialty paints for aerospace and marine
- 

Automotive body repair

Sources of exposure to chromium

Workers are exposed to chromium during the production and processing of its alloys. They can be affected by:

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Inhaling dust and fumes from chromium alloy production and fabrication activities.
- 

Inhaling metal particles and metal oxides created during “hot work” processes*.
- 

Exposure during chromium plating or surface coating.

Harmful effects of chromium

Exposure to chromium in the workplace can occur through inhalation and ingestion. The health effects may vary from acute to chronic:

- Irritation in:



Nose



Eyes



Skin

Severe effects include:



Skin inflammation and ulcers



Eye damage

Chronic exposure can cause:



Ulcers and septum holes



Occupational lung disease**



Allergic dermatitis



Hearing impairment



Asthma



Kidney damage



Lung cancer



Foetal development issues



Male fertility issues

Insight: Hexavalent chromium compounds are classified as a Group 1 - Carcinogenic to humans by IARC^ and as an A1 - Confirmed Human Carcinogen by ACGIH^A.

How can one protect against it?

In order to reduce exposure and risks to workers, you can:



Conduct risk assessment to compare exposure levels with limits.



Implement engineering controls such as local exhaust ventilation (LEV).



Get Respiratory Protective Equipment (RPE).

What RPE does 3M recommend for protection against chromium?

3M has a range of RPE that can help reduce your exposure to dusts, mists, metal fume, as well as gases and vapours commonly encountered in metal production and fabrication.

Type of Respirators	Recommended 3M Respiratory Protective Equipment***	
 Powered Air Respirator	 3M™ Versaflo™ Powered Air Turbo Starter Kit TR-619A	 3M™ Versaflo™ M-Series Helmet with Comfort Faceseal, M-306  3M™ Versaflo™ Filter TR-6580ANZ, A1B1E1HgP3 or High Efficiency Particle Filter TR-6710ANZ
 Supplied Air Respirator	 3M™ Versaflo™ Vortex Cooling Assembly, V-100 OR  3M™ Versaflo™ Supplied Air Regulator, V-500E	 3M™ Versaflo™ M-Series Helmet with Comfort Faceseal, M-306
 Reusable Respirator	 3M™ Secure Click™ Full Facepiece Reusable Respirator FF-800 OR  3M™ Half Facepiece HF-800SD Series	 3M™ Secure Click™ Particulate Filter D3138, P3R, with Nuisance Level Organic Vapour/Acid Gas Relief
 Disposable Respirator	 3M™ Aura™ Particulate Respirator 9322A+, P2	 3M™ Particulate Respirator 8214, N95, with Faceseal and Nuisance Level Organic Vapour Relief

*Hot work processes include cutting, grinding, and even polishing metals, which can create particles of metal and metal oxides that can be inhaled.
Occupational lung diseases may include hypersensitivity pneumonitis and pneumoconiosis. ^The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and ^^the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) are organizations involved in cancer research and occupational health. *This is only recommendation for minimum PPE required. Each work application must be evaluated by a competent person as required by local law and regulation for the hazard and risk before selection of right PPE. Workplace rules and regulations must take precedent, if more stringent.

REQUEST A DEMO

To know which respiratory protection is best suited for your work environment, scan the QR code.

AU and NZ



READ MORE

For more information on the hazard and product disclaimers, scan the QR code for the technical bulletin.

AU and NZ



EXPLORE MORE

To discover variety of respiratory protection equipment from 3M, for your workers, scan the QR code.

AU



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3M Australia Pty Ltd
Personal Safety Division
Bldg A, 1 Rivett Road
North Ryde NSW 2113
Customer Service: 1300 363 565
Web: 3M.com.au/ppesafety

3M New Zealand Limited
Personal Safety Division
94 Apollo Drive
Rosedale, Auckland 0632
Customer Services: 0800 252 627
Web: 3M.com/nz/ppesafety

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