



Welders Run A 43% Increased Risk of Lung Cancer.

However, Protecting Welders is Easy. What Can Employers Do?

The employer has the primary responsibility to ensure that welders, as far as reasonably practicable, are not exposed to health and safety risks whilst performing their job. The employer can achieve this by introducing engineering or administrative controls such as extract ventilation and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as welding powered air-purifying respirators (PAPR).

2019 meta-analysis on exposure to welding fume Based on the 2017 IARC reclassification of welding fume and the more recent 2019 meta-analysis on exposure to welding fume and the risk of lung cancer, all employers of welders should consider reviewing their risk assessments for welding activities and revise where necessary their control measures to protect those undertaking welding activities. If you want to learn more about the 2019 meta-analysis on exposure to welding fume and the risk of lung cancer, Australian Welding Supplies have just released their 2020 Welding Fume Update.

The paper takes a closer look at the 2019 statistical study on welding fume which concluded that welders run a 43% increased risk of lung cancer when compared with those who have never welded or been exposed to welding fume.

The welding code of practice The Welding Code of Practice released by Safe Work Australia stipulates that employers 'must ensure that air monitoring is carried out to determine the airborne concentration of a substance or mixture at the workplace to which an exposure standard applies if:

- you are not certain on reasonable grounds whether or not the airborne concentration of the substance or mixture at the workplace exceeds the relevant exposure standard or - monitoring is necessary to determine whether there is a risk to health (1)'. Australian & New Zealand Work, Health and Safety Laws Under both the Australian Work, Health and Safety Laws and the New Zealand Health and Safety at Work Regulations, a person who directs the carrying out of work (eg. employer) at a workplace must provide PPE to workers carrying out work unless the personal protective equipment has been provided by another person conducting a business or undertaking, like a labour-hire company.

As an employer, once you have selected the appropriate PPE 'you must provide the worker with information, training, and instruction in the proper use and wearing of that PPE' (1). Proper guidance should be given on the storage of equipment and care and maintenance guidelines should be clear and adhered to.

Where to from here? For help on selecting suitable respiratory protection for your specific welding application, or training and instruction on the proper use, fitting, or care and maintenance of your welding PPE, please contact AWS or use the links below.

[Download the 2020 Welding Fume Paper Here](#)

References

1) Welding processes code of practice, Safe Work Australia, May 2018

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