

Hidden Threat of Shop Towels

Studies conclude that workers who use laundered shop towels can be unknowingly exposed to toxic heavy metals in amounts that can exceed established exposure guidelines.

1 How do workers use shop towels?



WIPING TOOLS



WIPING SURFACES



PERSONAL WIPING

Heavy metals used in manufacturing get onto shop towels.

2 The big picture

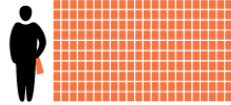
Worker uses on average

12 TOWELS PER DAY

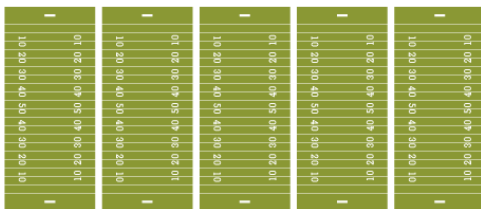


Shop towels used by a worker over a 40-year career lifespan:

117,600



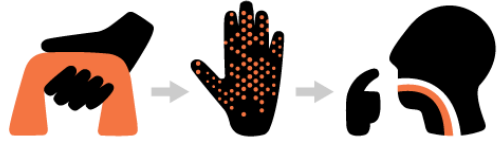
≡ approx. surface area of **5 football fields**



3 How heavy metals get into shop towels

Shop towels, even after laundering, could contain toxic heavy metals. These metals that are not otherwise found in a facility could be introduced by laundered shop towels previously used in other facilities.

4 Heavy metals can be transferred to the mouth

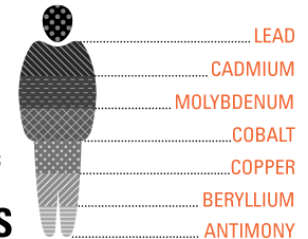


An average person touches their face **16 TIMES PER HOUR**

5 Potential risks

Workers using 12 towels a day may be exposed to excessive levels of

7 HEAVY METALS

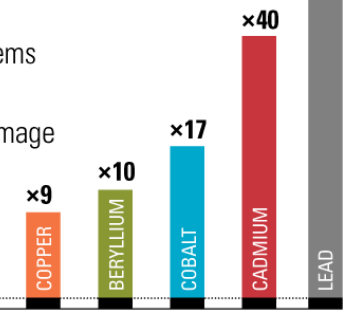


Ingestion of heavy metals is associated with

HEALTH RISKS

- Cancer
- Reproductive problems
- Skin disease
- Nervous system damage
- Kidney disease

NORMALIZED EXPOSURE LIMITS



Workers using the average number of shop towels can be exposed to certain heavy metals at levels greatly exceeding exposure limits. Workers who use more towels are at risk for even greater exposure.