

## Measuring Lead in the Air

Airborne lead is measured in micrograms per cubic meter of air.

A cubic meter is about the size of a street corner post office drop box. The abbreviation for a cubic meter is  $m^3$ .

A microgram is a measure of weight. The abbreviation for microgram is  $\mu g$ .



There are one million micrograms in a gram. A penny weighs about two grams. Imagine cutting a penny in 2 million pieces. A microgram would weigh the same as one of those 2 million pieces.

Another common unit of weight is the milligram. 1000 micrograms make up one milligram. 1000 milligrams make up one gram. The abbreviation for milligram is mg.

The PEL (Permissible Exposure Limit) for lead is  $50 \mu g/m^3$ . Imagine a single rain drop in a three story building – that is how much  $50 \mu g/m^3$  is. Even this amount of lead can damage your health.

## Measuring Lead in Blood

The OSHA Lead Standard says you need a blood test when you first work with lead. The level of lead in your blood is measured in micrograms of lead per deciliter of blood. A deciliter of blood is a little less than a half of cup. A person weighing 165 lbs has about 60 deciliters of blood. The abbreviation for deciliter is dl.

## Measuring Lead in Paint

Lead in paint is measured in milligrams per square centimeter. Any surface coating that contains more than 1 milligram of lead per square centimeter is considered Lead-Based Paint by HUD.

A square centimeter is a measure of area. It is about the same size as the side of a sugar cube.



Lead in paint is also measured by weight. If lead is .06% of the weight of the paint, the paint is considered Lead-Based Paint.