

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?

If you feel that your workplace is unsafe and needs a health and safety evaluation, you can contact OSHA at (617) 565-9860 or the Massachusetts Department of Labor Standards at (617) 969-7177.

If your asthma is caused or worsened by work, you have the right to file for workers' compensation. Benefits include:

- Payment of all medical bills related to your asthma
- Coverage of prescription drugs for your asthma
- Up to 60% of the pay that you lost if you were out sick for 5 or more days
- Compensation if you become disabled

IN ORDER TO OBTAIN WORKERS' COMPENSATION:

- Tell your employer about your health condition right away. Ask him/her to file a First Report of Injury.
- If you are denied compensation you have the right to appeal.

For more information, contact the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Safety at 1-800-323-3249.

WHO CAN I CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION?

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE WORK-RELATED ASTHMA PROJECT AT:

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM

Massachusetts Department of Public Health

250 Washington Street, 6th Floor
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 624-5681

www.mass.gov/dph/workrelatedasthma
occupational.asthma@state.ma.us

OTHER RESOURCES INCLUDE:

The American Lung Association

1-800-LUNG USA (586-4872),
Option #2
[Lungne.org](http://lungne.org)

The Association of Occupational and Environmental Clinics

<http://www.aococ.org/>



AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION.
1-800-499-LUNG | lungne.org



IS MY ASTHMA WORK-RELATED?

ASK YOURSELF THREE SIMPLE QUESTIONS:



1. Does my asthma get better on days away from work or on vacations?
2. Are there any materials, activities, or specific locations at work that make my asthma worse?
3. Does my asthma get worse over the course of the work week?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions you may have Work-Related Asthma.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

- Keep a record of your asthma attacks. Tell your doctor when your asthma gets better or worse.
- Tell your doctor about your work.
- Learn more about the substances used at your workplace.
- Create an Asthma Action Plan with your doctor.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF ASTHMA?

- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Chest Tightness
- Shortness of Breath
- Difficulty Breathing



WHAT IS WORK-RELATED ASTHMA?

Work-related asthma is asthma caused or made worse by work. Asthma symptoms may start right after you breathe in a particular substance or symptoms may be delayed, beginning after work or even at night.

Symptoms usually get worse at work but get better during vacations or long weekends. If your asthma becomes more severe, symptoms may not get better even after time away from work.

Work-related asthma may be reversible, but permanent damage, or even death can occur if exposure continues.

WHAT CAUSES WORK-RELATED ASTHMA?

There are many substances in the workplace that can cause asthma or make asthma worse:

- Isocyanates (in products like polyurethane foam & auto paints)
- Certain cleaners & disinfectants
- Latex rubber
- Grain & flour dust
- Wood dusts
- Animal dander
- Cockroaches
- Some molds
- Some metals such as nickel & chromium
- Cigarette smoke

WHO GETS WORK-RELATED ASTHMA?

Workers in many jobs can be exposed to substances that can cause or worsen asthma. Some examples are:

- Nurses & other health care workers
- Teachers/School staff
- Beauty salon workers
- Janitors & housekeeping staff
- Animal handlers
- Construction workers
- Laboratory technicians
- Paper, textile, plastic or other manufacturing workers
- Bakers
- Office workers

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HOW CAN WORK-RELATED ASTHMA BE PREVENTED?

Federal safety laws require your employer to provide a safe & healthy workplace.



Your employer should protect you by taking the following steps to make your workplace healthier.

- **Remove** substances that cause asthma, and replace them with safer materials. Eliminate hazards like tobacco smoke or mold.
- **Ventilate** using ventilation systems to remove hazardous substances. Maintain these systems to ensure good air quality.
- **Provide** respirators or masks to reduce exposures to hazardous substances. Respirators require medical approval, hazard assessments & training.
- **Provide** skin protection, such as gloves, aprons & face shields to protect against substances that can be absorbed through the skin & can cause asthma.
- **Train** employees about hazards and prevention.