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 Foreman: _____

Date: _____
 G.C. _____

SMOHIT Safety Sense Toolbox Talks for the Sheet Metal Industry	<h3 style="margin: 0;">Latex Allergies</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the past few years, there has been an increase in the use of natural rubber latex gloves by all types of workers. Specifically, natural rubber latex gloves are used by sheet metal workers to handle chemicals or to assist in first aid procedures of minor cuts and scrapes. Anywhere from 6% to 17% of the exposed workforce is allergic to natural rubber latex (NRL). Some people develop allergies to the tree proteins present in latex, and some to the rubber processing compounds used. Exposure is caused by direct skin contact and the inhalation of airborne natural rubber latex. The powder used on these gloves can carry NRL particles into the air. Natural rubber latex can cause both irritant and allergic reactions. Symptoms may include hives, teary eyes, runny or itchy nose, sneezing, and so on. A rare but serious reaction is anaphylaxis, where swelling in the face, lips, and airway causes shortness of breath and may progress to shock and eventually death. Many workers who develop an allergic reaction to natural rubber latex experience a progression from skin irritation to respiratory symptoms over a period of months or years. Once the allergy occurs, individuals continue to have symptoms, even from incidental exposure to natural rubber latex. If you are allergic to natural rubber latex, you can avoid an allergic reaction by using low- or powder-free gloves, or more allergy-friendly gloves. 	<h3 style="margin: 0;">Instructor Tips</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain to workers that not everyone will be affected by latex allergies, but those who are should take extra precautions when working near latex. Emphasize that if any worker has sensitivity to latex they should speak with their supervisor if they have not already.
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