Job site: _____ Date: _____
Foreman: _____ G.C. _____

SMOHIT Safety Sense
Toolbox Talks for the Sheet Metal Industry

Tuberculosis

- Many people believe that tuberculosis, or TB, is a thing of the past. But in reality, TB is still a leading killer of young adults worldwide, and in the United States, TB has resurfaced as a serious public health problem.
- TB is a chronic bacterial infection. M. tuberculosis is spread through the air and usually infects the lungs, but it can also affect other parts of the body, such as the brain, the kidneys, or the spine.
- TB is primarily an airborne disease, spread from person to person when someone infected with TB coughs, sneezes, speaks, or laughs. M. tuberculosis bacterium can also be found in ventilation systems, specifically those in hospitals and nursing homes.
- It usually takes extensive contact with someone with active TB for another to become infected. One in ten people that are infected with M. tuberculosis may develop active TB at some time in their lives. The risk of developing active disease is greatest in the first year after infection, but active disease often does not occur until many years later. People with TB who have been treated with appropriate drugs for at least two weeks are no longer contagious and do not spread the germ to others.
- Exposure symptoms for Tuberculosis include a persistent cough, low-grade fever, night sweats, fatigue, and weight loss. Some people may not have obvious symptoms or they may be vague and go unnoticed by the affected individual. One in three patients with TB will die within weeks to months if the disease is not treated. For the rest, the disease either goes into remission or becomes chronic and more debilitating. With appropriate antibiotic treatment, TB can be cured in more than 90% of patients.
- TB is a largely preventable disease. Wear a NIOSH-approved, high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtered respirator or Class N95 when working in any place where there is high risk of TB exposure.
- Get TB tests regularly, especially if you work in a high-risk area for an extended period of time.

Instructor Tips

- **Provide a NIOSH-approved HEPA filtered respirator as an example to workers.**
- **Emphasize the importance of regular TB tests to workers who may be exposed to high-risk TB area for extended periods of time, such as workers who work on the duct systems in health care facilities.**

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Reference: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health