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## **WELDING ON GALVANIZED METALS**

One of the most significant health hazards in the welding process is the generation of fumes and gases.

Do you weld on galvanized metals? Zinc is the coating used on galvanized metals, and when you heat the metal, it produces vaporized metal droplets which are called fumes. This is the smoky haze which consists of fine particles of metals or silicates. When you breathe these fumes, they may work deeply into your lungs.

The typical effect of breathing zinc fumes is metal fume fever. One or two hours or more after welding-without proper personal protection-you may experience severe thirst, pain in the legs, shivering, congestion in the head, dryness and tickling of the throat, and a cough. In bad cases, you may feel severe shivering, a high fever, buzzing in the ears, nausea, vomiting, and even hallucinations and convulsions. Your symptoms will usually last 24 hours.

Some of you may weld for a period of time and find some of the symptoms appeared, then went away. You may actually have built up an immunity that hides the full effects. If you take a break from welding over the weekend or over a holiday, the symptoms will often come back again the next time you weld on galvanized metal. Because of this behavior, metal fume fever is sometimes known as "Monday morning sickness."

### **Protect yourself if you weld on galvanized metals, by following these precautions:**

In all operations where metal fumes are present, you should work in a well-ventilated area. The best way to protect yourself against metal fumes is to use local exhaust ventilation at the source of smoke. Do not recirculate the air in the shop.

If good local ventilation is not possible you should wear an approved respirator, which will fit underneath your welding helmet, to protect yourself from fumes. This respirator collects the fume particles and keeps them from entering your lungs. (A paper dust mask is not adequate).

If you find white dust inside your welding shield, you are not properly protecting yourself from the fumes.

After you have finished welding, wash your hands and face thoroughly with soap and water.

Do not eat, drink, or smoke in areas contaminated by welding fumes.

If you think you are experiencing symptoms of metal fume fever, report it to your supervisor. Physicians' familiar with this illness say that the best treatment is to drink plenty of water and go to bed and rest.

Finally, did you know that you can "contaminate" your family by bringing home zinc particles on your clothing? Protect both yourself and your family-Weld Safely.