Sheet Metal Worker Safety Stats and Facts

FACTS

Heavy equipment, sharp metal and dangerous chemicals all pose potential threats to sheet metal contractors.

1. **Poor Workplace Ergonomics or Working Practices.** Repetitive tasks and motions or even sudden exertions can cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), also known as repetitive stress injuries (RSIs). MSDs are an umbrella of injuries that affect joints, muscles, tendons and nerves.
2. **Welding Incidents.** Both the heat and light that welding produces are safety threats, potentially causing burns and eyesight damage.
3. **Tool- and Machine-Related Injuries.** Sheet metal contractors must be near dangerous heavy machinery. If tools aren't used properly or if machines aren't correctly guarded, the risk of injury can increase significantly.
4. **Chemical Hazards.** Toxic or dangerous chemicals can present just as much a safety hazard as sharp metal or metalworking tools. Chemicals can cause injury when touched, inhaled or ingested. In enclosed, poorly ventilated areas, toxic fumes can pose a particularly significant threat.
5. **Hearing Loss.** Noise generated by metalworking can be extraordinarily loud – to the point where it can damage workers' hearing within hours. Hearing loss cannot be reversed once it happens, and it can make it hard to hear warning signals or talk with others.

STATS

- There were more than 1,100 reported nonfatal injuries in the metalworking industry in 2019 in the United States alone.
- With sharp edges and varying weight, sheet metal increases

the potential risk for an injury to occur. In 2018, the rate of nonfatal occupational injuries for the metal fabrication industry was 4.1 recordable cases per 100 employees. Recordable cases are injuries that need treatment beyond a First Aid kit.

- The average total cost of a recordable injury in metal fabrication is over $80,000.
- There are over 130,000 sheet metal workers in the US handling large sheets of metal.
- There are over 56,000 workers assembling and fabricating in the structural metal manufacturing sub-industry.
- More than 2,000 eye injuries occur every day in the United States. In the metalworking industry, eye injuries are caused by flying metal fragments, projectiles, dust, and other debris kicked up by machinery. 90% of eye injuries can be prevented by wearing the appropriate eye protection. Choosing safety glasses or goggles that suit the particular hazards of your environment can prevent a painful injury or even blindness.
- Worker’s hands are exposed to numerous hazards throughout the metal fabrication process, with over 47,000 laborers moving materials by hand in metal fabrication, gloves are definitely necessary.