

Tungsten Fact Sheet

Tungsten is a metal that occurs in nature. Tungsten compounds and alloys are used in many industries due to their hardness and strength. Tungsten compounds are also used as pigments and flame retardants.

Tungsten is found in:

- Metal components used in a wide variety of products and applications, including:
 - Hard metal tools for construction, metalworking, and drilling.
 - Welding supplies and equipment.
 - Electronics.
 - Ammunition.
 - Sports and hobby equipment, such as fishing weights, darts, golf clubs, and exercise weights.
 - Jewelry, such as wedding bands.
- Some pigments for ceramic glazes and paints.
- Some flame retardants for fabrics.

Possible health concerns of tungsten

Hard metal dusts that contain tungsten combined with other known toxic metals like cobalt pose health hazards. The possible health concerns of exposure to tungsten and tungsten compounds on their own are not well understood. A US government agency¹ is studying the toxicity of a tungsten compound in laboratory animals, including its potential to affect the immune system or contribute to cancer risk.

Possible ways to reduce exposure to tungsten

- If you work with tungsten or do any welding or metalworking, be sure your work area is well ventilated and use proper protective equipment. Follow other safe work practices, including washing hands frequently, keeping work dust out of your home, and washing work clothes separately.

¹ The National Toxicology Program, part of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences