

Occupations and Workplaces

Painter

On this page

[What does a painter do?](#)

[What are some health and safety issues for painters?](#)

[What are some preventive measures for painters?](#)

[What are some good general safe work practices?](#)

What does a painter do?

A painter applies paint and other decorative finishes to interior and exterior surfaces of buildings and other structures.

Some of the main duties of a painter are to:

- Prepare surfaces to be painted (includes scraping, removal of wallpaper, etc.).
- Determine what materials will be needed.
- Use, clean, and maintain various equipment.
- Supervise apprentices or other workers.
- Provide estimates and invoices for clients.

What are some health and safety issues for painters?

Painters can work at a variety of workplaces, construction sites, homes, etc. and face a constantly changing set of hazards. The hazards include:

- [Working at heights.](#)
- [Ladders, platforms and scaffolds.](#)
- Working in [confined spaces.](#)
- Risk of [eye injury.](#)
- [Slips, trips and falls.](#)

- Risk of injury from falling objects.
 - Exposure to [moulds, fungi and bacteria](#).
 - Exposure to [bird](#) and [rodent](#) droppings.
 - Exposure to paint products, solvents, [lead](#) and other toxic substances.
 - Proximity to [flammable or combustible](#) materials.
 - Working in [awkward positions](#), or performing [repetitive physical tasks](#).
 - [Standing](#) for long periods of time.
 - [Lifting](#) heavy or awkward objects.
 - Exposure to [heat](#) and [ultraviolet radiation](#).
 - [Noise](#).
 - [Stress](#).
 - [Electrical hazards](#) from working close to live electrical power lines or equipment.
 - [Shift work](#) or [extended work days](#).
 - [Working alone](#).
-

What are some preventive measures for painters?

- Check safety data sheet (SDS) of the paint or coating product for safe use of the product and the selection and use of appropriate personal protective equipment, including [respiratory](#) and [footwear](#) protection.
- Evaluate the work area for existing and potential hazards. Know the [control](#) measures of the identified hazards and associated risks. Know the [routes of entry](#) of chemicals into the body.
- Use the [hierarchy of controls](#) and select less harmful substances or products where possible.
- Maintain good [ventilation](#) during painting.
- Learn the correct procedures for working at heights.
- Select the correct ladder for the job. Use an extended handle paintbrush whenever possible, and eliminate the use of ladders.
- Learn safe lifting techniques.
- Know how to prevent injury from electrical hazards. Maintain safe distances from energized electrical equipment or utility lines.

- Keep [tools](#) and equipment in good working order.
 - Keep work areas clear of clutter and equipment and ensure proper housekeeping is in place.
 - Learn safety procedures for working in confined spaces.
 - Know how to prevent exposure to bird and rodent droppings.
 - Avoid awkward body positions and take breaks when needed.
-

What are some good general safe work practices?

- Practice safety procedures for:
 - Working at heights
 - Working with [asbestos-containing](#) materials.
 - Using [ladders](#)
 - [Lifting](#)
 - [Repetitive](#) physical tasks
 - Selection, use, maintenance and storage of [personal protective equipment](#)
 - [Confined space](#) entry
 - Follow company safety rules.
 - Learn about chemical hazards, [WHMIS](#) and [SDSs](#).
 - Know how to [report a hazard](#)
 - Follow [good housekeeping](#) procedures.
-

Fact sheet last revised: 2026-04-30

Disclaimer

Although every effort is made to ensure the accuracy, currency and completeness of the information, CCOHS does not guarantee, warrant, represent or undertake that the information provided is correct, accurate or current. CCOHS is not liable for any loss, claim, or demand arising directly or indirectly from any use or reliance upon the information.