

Construction - Painters

These are the most common injuries and hazards for painters in the construction industry, as shown by injury claims.

Ear

Hearing loss from noise.

Neck

Strains and sprains from repetitive actions.

Lung

Back

Strains from lifting or carrying heavy objects, or slips, trips, and falls when handling materials. Injuries caused by falls and slips.

Forearm/Wrist

Fractures and cuts from slips and trips, as well as falling from ladders and scaffolds. Muscle strains from lifting paint tins.

Leg

Fractures, strains and sprains from slips, trips, and falls when carrying out tasks such as handling heavy items. Cuts from walking into objects.

Eye

Shoulder

Strains and sprains from using tools, working overhead or above shoulder height, moving equipment, or falling from ladders/scaffolds.

Skin

Abdomen

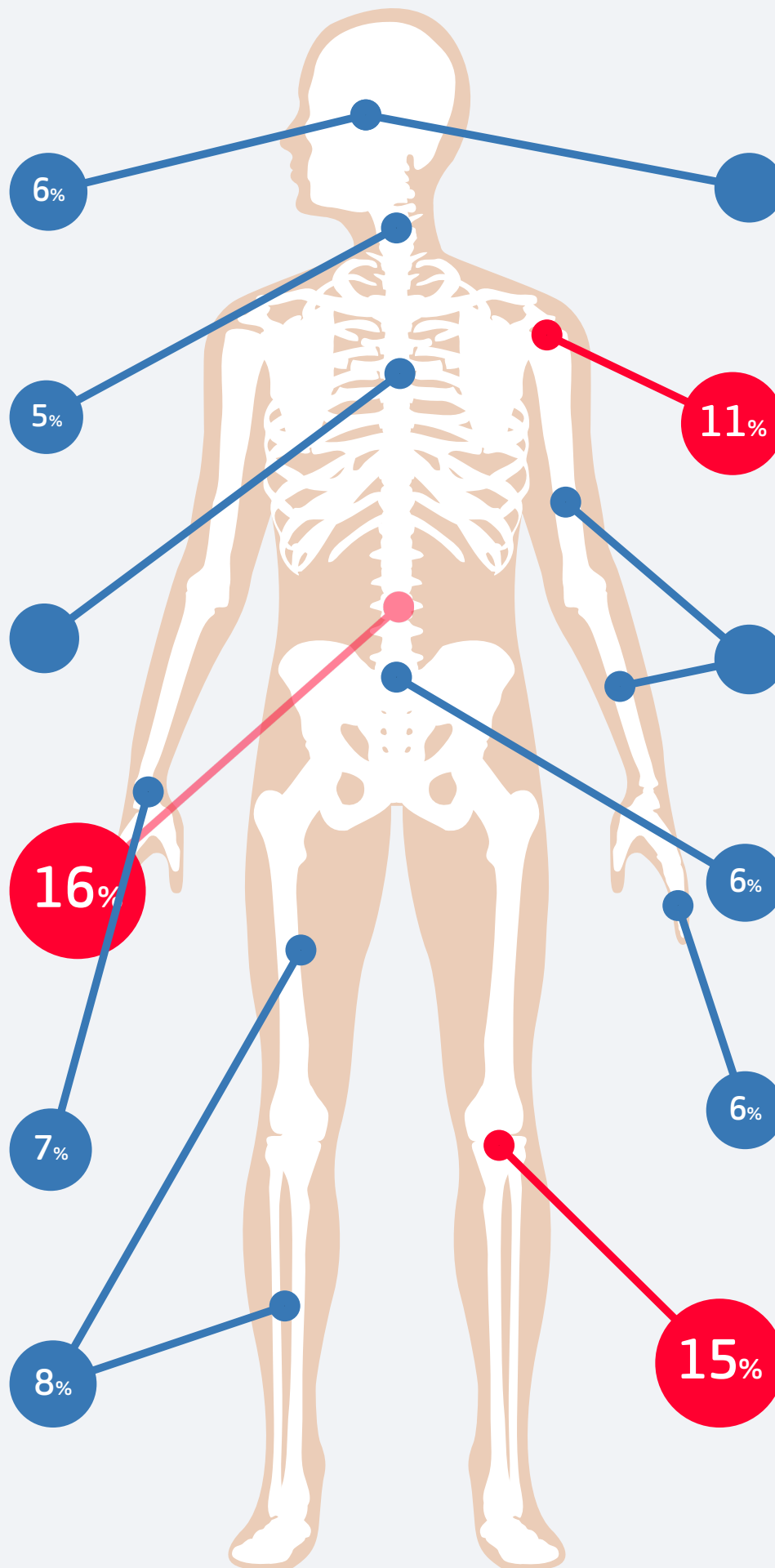
Hernias from heavy lifting (e.g. ladders, furniture, or paint tins).

Hand/Fingers

Cuts from knives, scrapers and sanders. Fractures from slips, trips, and falls. Strains from lifting or repetitive tasks.

Knee

Fractures, strains and sprains from slips, trips, and falls. Cuts from walking into objects. Strains from prolonged kneeling on hard surfaces.



Safety solutions

WorkSafe expects employers to have safety solutions in place to protect workers from injury and illness.

Below are some common solutions known to reduce the risk of injury. Employers should work together with their employees to determine the most effective solutions for their workplace.

Hotspots

Solution

Exposure to chemicals

- Skin
- Lung
- Eye

- Treat all chemicals as potentially dangerous to health, unless material safety data sheet (MSDS) states otherwise.
- Check paint is not lead-based before sanding or removing it.
- Provide appropriate breathing protection if lead-based paint.
- Select paints that have low toxicity (e.g. water based paints).
- Ensure work areas are well ventilated.
- Store and dispose of paints, thinners and solvents appropriately (refer to MSDS for further information).
- Provide appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment (e.g. long sleeved shirts, pants, disposable coveralls, respirators, gloves, eye protection) and ensure it is worn.

Lifting, pushing and handling materials

- Back
- Forearm/Wrist
- Hand/Fingers
- Abdomen

- Arrange for paint tins and supplies to be delivered as close as possible to the work location.
- Use wheelers or trolleys to move large paint tins, or decant paint into smaller containers. Avoid carrying paint tins larger than 10 litres.
- Use tools with extension handles (e.g. long-handled paint rollers).
- Position paint tins or trays near workers and at waist height (e.g. place tins on a stand).

Noise

- Ear

- Ensure employees are not exposed to noise that exceeds the exposure standard.
- Arrange for a noise assessment if employees are exposed to excessive noise (e.g. workers have to raise their voices to communicate over a distance of one metre) and there is uncertainty as to whether employees exposure may have exceeded the noise exposure standard.
- Eliminate or minimise the source of noise (e.g. enclose or isolate noisy machinery, reduce vibration, use barriers to absorb and screens to block the direct path of sound, use silencers on air exhausts, exhaust pneumatics out of the area, buy the quietest tools/machinery available).
- Place warning signs in areas of excessive and continual noise (e.g. where employees exposure is likely to exceed the exposure standard).
- Warn other workers nearby that you will be undertaking noisy work and advise them to move away or wear hearing protection.
- Provide hearing equipment and ensure it is worn at all times, and provide employees with audiometric testing. Employers should provide a choice of different types of hearing protection appropriate to the noise level in the workplace.

Slips, trips and falls (including falls from height)

- Back
- Knee
- Shoulder
- Leg
- Forearm/Wrist
- Hand/Fingers

- Avoid working at height if possible - use tools with extension handles (e.g. long-handled paint rollers).
- If working at height is required, provide appropriate height access equipment, use the highest level of falls protection (e.g. mobile scaffolds, elevated work platforms or step platforms instead of ladders) as is reasonably practicable. On suitable surfaces, ensure it is used properly and maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications. If a ladder is required, use industrial grade only and ensure it is well-maintained.
- Ensure height-access equipment is set-up properly on suitable surfaces.
- Ensure work is done away from voids, openings or edges (e.g. steps, stairs, verandas/balconies).
- Block off all openings (e.g. doors and windows).
- Ensure all working areas and access ways are clean, level, well-lit and in good condition.
- Set up drop sheets and position materials and equipment so they do not become tripping hazards.
- Remove unwanted materials and construction waste from the site so it does not accumulate.

Using equipment and tools

- Knee
- Shoulder
- Leg
- Forearm/Wrist
- Hand/Fingers
- Neck

- Provide appropriate equipment (e.g. sit-down trolleys for low work) and ensure it is used properly and maintained in accordance with manufacturer specifications.
- Ensure electrical equipment has been tested and tagged.
- When working with blades or sharp tools, ensure they are guarded or employees wear appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g. puncture resistant gloves, safety glasses).
- Ensure employees are not exposed to repetitive work for long periods (e.g. by using job rotation, work variation such as painting, taping, edging).

Visit worksafe.vic.gov.au/hotspots
WorkSafe Advisory Service Toll-free 1800 136 089

Your health and safety contact is:

You must consult with the people who will be affected by changes before any changes affecting their occupational safety or health are put in place. If someone is injured at work, their employer must ensure they receive proper care and support their safe return to work. WorkSafe Victoria is a trading name of the Victorian WorkCover Authority.