

What You **Need to Know** About **Working with** **Lead-Based Paint**



Homes or apartments built before 1978 may contain lead paint. Exposure to lead-paint dust or chips can cause serious health problems. Children and pregnant women are at higher risk.

If you own rental property, it is your responsibility to repair chipping or peeling lead painted surfaces. It is important to assess the need for repairs every year or when a new occupant moves in. The owner is responsible for all monitoring and maintenance activities.

If you rent and have peeling, chipping paint, you should contact your landlord about repairing the painted surfaces.

Whether you are the person doing the repairs or you are hiring a worker or contractor, it is important to do the work properly so as not to create new risks for lead exposure.

WORKERS AND CONTRACTORS

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandates that any contractor or worker who performs renovation in a pre-1978 apartment, school or facility (including private homes) must be trained and certified in EPA Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP).

Who must be certified?

Anyone who is paid to perform work that disturbs lead-based paint in homes, child-care facilities and pre-schools built before 1978. This may include, but is not limited to, residential rental property owners, general contractors, painters and special trade contractors (such as, plumbers, carpenters, and electricians).

How does a person become certified and where can I find a list of certified firms?

Information about EPA-approved training providers and certified renovators is available online at www.epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program.

What activities are subject to the Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting Program?

Any activity that disturbs more than six square feet of lead paint

per room for interior activities or more than 20 square feet on any exterior surface. US EPA regulations require that prior to starting work, contractors must provide occupants with a copy of the Renovate Right pamphlet, available in English and Spanish (see more information at end of brochure).

Federal regulations also require using EPA-certified contractors to perform most lead remediation work ordered by government agencies. The owner or contractor needs to clear the remediation method with the agency before beginning the project.

HOMEOWNERS

As a homeowner, you can choose to do the work yourself. Only those people who are paid to do the work are subject to the federal rule and are mandated to receive the proper training. But anyone who does the work must ALWAYS use lead safe work practices. During the work, you might stir up dust or create fumes containing lead. This can be very dangerous for adults, children and pets. Always use a method that creates the least amount of dust and fumes.

IF YOU ARE GOING TO DISTURB LEAD-BASED PAINT FOLLOW THESE PRACTICES:

- Children and pregnant women must not do any lead paint removal work, and they should stay out of the work area until clean-up is complete. (See “Clean-Up” section.) If you’re not sure you can clean up every day, arrangements for temporary living quarters should be made.
- Work in one room at a time, and seal off the work area from the rest of the house, including any heating or ventilation ducts, using heavy plastic sheets (6-mil thickness).



What you should know about lead testing...

Children who may have been exposed to lead-based paint should have a blood test to see if they have elevated blood levels. All children one and two years of age, or who may have been exposed, should be tested. Other children under six years of age, or who may have been exposed, should be tested if their doctors think they are at risk.

- EVERYTHING in the room (furniture, rugs, carpets, floors, bedding, drapes, dishware, food, toys, etc.) must be removed, or covered with TWO sheets of plastic (6-mil) and all the seams taped. Plastic used to cover the floor should be secured to the wall or baseboard with duct tape.
- Wear disposable coveralls, shoes, hair covering, goggles and a properly fitting respirator.



- Only HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) respirators will filter lead dust and fumes. Simple paper or fabric dust masks will NOT protect you from lead dust.
- To avoid ingesting lead, do not eat, drink or smoke while working.
- Clean up carefully. Before leaving the work area, dispose of coveralls, and remove dust from your clothes with a HEPA filtered vacuum cleaner. Shower as soon as you can, so you do not spread lead dust around your home or elsewhere.

METHODS TO REDUCE OR REMOVE EXPOSURE TO LEAD-BASED PAINT:

There are many ways to reduce the hazards of lead-based paint – but SOME METHODS OF REMOVING PAINT ACTUALLY INCREASE THE RISK OF LEAD EXPOSURE. It's important to pick the safest method for your project. The goal is to reduce the hazard while creating as little lead dust as possible.

How to make your home lead-safe:

'Control Dust'

To control lead dust, regularly check all painted surfaces of your home for chipping or peeling. Look carefully at painted areas that rub together, like doors, windows, and stairways. If you see dust and chips, wet clean with damp paper towels or mop often. Other dust control methods for friction surfaces include carpeting stairways and installing window wells or window track liners.





‘Stabilize Paint’

Paint film stabilization is a way to temporarily fix loose paint by creating a smooth surface that generates less lead dust. First, wet the area with a spray bottle and water before scraping or sanding. Then, prime and re-paint, and clean up thoroughly (for more detail, see EPA resources).

How to make your repairs last:

‘Create a Durable Barrier’

One way of reducing exposure to lead paint is to cover the surface with a new surface—often known as enclosure. This can be achieved by putting up drywall or by covering windowsills with vinyl or

aluminum, for example. This doesn’t require the removal of the lead paint, so this is often the easiest solution. Be careful sealing all edges, joints and seams to create a dust-tight seal. If the new surface is ever removed or damaged, the lead problem returns. Materials used to enclose lead-painted surfaces should be durable and fire resistant, such as sheet rock or drywall, aluminum, vinyl siding, wood paneling, new flooring, or tile.

‘Use a Coating that Lasts’

Adhesive coating, also known as encapsulation, is a technique that bonds materials to the existing painted surface. It is more than just a coat of paint, in that the thick coating is bonded to the lead paint. It is important to follow product instructions exactly to be sure that a strong, long lasting bond is created.

‘Replace those Old Parts’

Replacement is the process of removing building components and installing new components that do not contain lead. This method is a common option when replacing components such as windows, doors, railings, cabinets, and trim.

'Remove Old Paint'

This technique is a complete removal of all leaded paint from the underlying surface. There are several ways to remove lead-based paint:

- **Wet scraping:** surfaces are misted with water while using hand scrapers to dislodge the paint
- **Wet sanding or power sanding with a HEPA filter vacuum:** wet sanding sponges are used to minimize dust or an electric sander is equipped with a HEPA filtered vacuum attachment
- **Heat removal:** using a low temperature heat gun below 1100°F, followed by hand scraping



NEVER use these methods: Open flame burning, machine sanding without a HEPA attachment, abrasive sand blasting, and power washing without a method to trap water and paint chips.



CLEAN-UP

It is very important to do a proper cleaning of lead dust and debris after any work is done. Cleaning ensures that lead hazards are not left behind at the end of the day or end of the project. The work areas should be wet cleaned daily, by misting and collecting debris in 6-mil plastic bags followed by using wet cloths

or wet mops on all surfaces. Homeowners can dispose of debris along with household trash.

At the end of the project, use a HEPA-filtered vacuum on all surfaces (floors, walls, ceilings, woodwork, carpeting, furniture). Then wet mop hardwood surfaces and clean other surfaces with wet cloths. The final step is to do another HEPA vacuuming of the entire work area.

MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE

It is important that all occupants and owners keep checking all lead-painted surfaces to make sure that temporary controls are working. Make necessary repairs to ensure they stay in a safe condition.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

*Call the New York State Health Department
Center for Environmental Health:*
518-402-7600 or 1-800-458-1158

*Or visit the New York State
Department of Health Website:*
www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/

Other useful resources for Homeowners or Contractors
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead Webpage:
www.epa.gov/lead

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Renovate Right Pamphlet:
www.epa.gov/lead/renovate-right-important-lead-hazard-information-families-child-care-providers-and-schools

New York State Department of Labor:
www.labor.ny.gov/home/

*Call your local health department for additional information or
for help in identifying qualified contractors experienced in
lead removal.*

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