

Fact Sheet: Home Repairs and Renovations

What You Should Know About Lead-Based Paint

Most houses and apartments built before 1978 contain lead-based paint. Lead-based paint produced before 1960 contains higher concentrations of lead than paint manufactured in later years.

Lead-based paint can be on walls, ceilings, woodwork, windows, and sometimes floors. When lead-based paint on these surfaces is broken, sanded, or scraped, it breaks into tiny, usually invisible, pieces that you or your child may swallow or inhale. Even small repair and renovation jobs, including repainting projects, can create enough lead dust and chips to harm you.

Before You Repair or Renovate

BEFORE you disturb a surface with old paint on it, you should, if possible,

- * Contact HomeSafe Lead Testing at 1-800-648-LEAD (or at www.leadpro.com) or another Lead Inspection service or call your county health department and get the painted area(s) tested.
- * If lead-based paint is found in your home, have the repair or renovation done by a worker who has been trained to protect your family and home from exposure to lead dust and chips.

If you FIND OR SUSPECT that you have Lead-Based Paint AVOID the following activities:

- * dry scraping, sanding, or using a heat gun on painted surfaces before repainting;
- * making holes in walls to get at pipes, or tearing out walls;
- * allowing furniture or other objects to bump against painted surfaces, or unnecessarily opening and closing windows and doors with painted frames and sills.

If you will DO RENOVATIONS YOURSELF where you suspect lead is present, you SHOULD:

- * Move children and pregnant women out until work is complete and the area is properly cleaned.
- * Seal off the work area with 6 mil plastic and duct tape.
- * Cover heating & AC ducts, furniture, carpets, rugs, and floors with plastic (dispose of carefully)
- * To keep dust down, lightly mist painted surfaces with water before you work on them.
- * Clean up carefully & thoroughly.

CLEAN UP: Always clean up dust and chips with wet mops or rags soaked in a solution of trisodium phosphate (TSP) or phosphate-containing powdered dishwasher detergent and warm water. (Powdered detergents are recommended because most have high phosphate content. Most multipurpose household cleaners are NOT effective in cleaning up lead dust.) To avoid skin irritation when cleaning with high-phosphate detergent, wear rubber gloves & use two buckets -one for wash water and one for rinse water.

- * To prevent recontamination of cleaned surfaces, wash mops and rags thoroughly after each use. If this is not possible, or if you have already used the mops and rags several times, place them in plastic bags and dispose of them carefully.
- * Avoid dry sweeping or vacuuming the work area with an ordinary vacuum. Sweeping spreads lead dust around. Vacuuming also spreads lead dust around, since tiny lead particles can pass through and out of ordinary vacuum cleaners.

If RENOVATIONS are IN PROGRESS you should:

- * Keep children away from paint dust and chips.
- * Clean up all dust and chips with wet mops and rags, as described above. Pay special attention to floors, window sills and window wells..
- * Close your windows if work is going on outside your home that may be scattering lead dust (for example, a neighbor scraping exterior paint). Using wet mops and rags, clean around windows.
- * Have children under six years old tested for lead. To arrange for testing, call your doctor or your local health department.