



Information

# What you need to know about Lead Based Paint

*Lead-based paint was taken off the market more than 20 years ago, when scientists discovered that it posed several deadly health hazards including blood poisoning. What exactly is considered lead-based paint? HUD equates 0.5% or 5000 ppm or greater of total paint to be lead-based paint. Lead has been used because it is an excellent corrosion inhibitor and pigment. Buildings constructed or painted prior to the early 1980's may contain lead compounds in the paint. (The highest amount of lead in paint was between 1930 -1955.)*

**Lead paint** may be absorbed into the body by ingestion (eating) and also by inhalation (breathing). Children have suffered from lead poisoning by eating lead-based paint flakes (chips), making it important to encapsulate or remove damaged lead-based paint in housing with small children. Lead is a "cumulative" toxin, making good personal hygiene practices very important, since ingestion is the major route of entry. For example, washing your hands is a must before eating, etc. Chronic adverse health effects are:

- *Blood-forming systems. Decreased hemoglobin (oxygen carrying material in blood), anorexia and anemia.*
- *Central nervous system. Fatigue, dullness, memory loss and possible seizures*
- *Urinary systems. Possible kidney damage with progression to kidney dialysis*
- *Reproductive systems. Decreased sex drive and possible risk of birth defects.*

*The paint can still be found in millions of homes across the nation, and its life- threatening hazards can be unleashed anew when buyers, renters, longtime homeowners and contractors merely scrape or sand-off old layers of paint on their walls.*

*Ten percent of the population has above acceptable levels of lead paint in their bodies. The EPA thinks much of it is coming from lead paint. The purpose of this required disclosure is to alert buyers and tenants to the dangers of lead paint and to expose offending sellers and landlords to financial risk. This is an important issue for our nation's children and for the pocketbooks of sellers and landlords.*

*Currently, federal law requires that individuals receive certain information before renting, buying or renovating pre-1978 housing. With this, I recommend that sellers provide buyers with: copies of all available records regarding such lead-based paint or hazards; a federally approved lead-based paint hazard information packet; a period of up to 10 days (or mutually agreed period), prior to becoming obligated under the purchase contract, to conduct a risk assessment or inspection for the presence of lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards (buyer may agree to waive this testing opportunity).*

*Additionally, certain mandatory disclosure and acknowledgment language must be included in the purchase contract. Generally, such contingencies provide the buyer a 10-day or other negotiated period to conduct lead-based paint testing, and to renegotiate, provide for remediation, or cancel the contract, if such lead-based paint hazards are found. If sellers and landlords do not abide by and the buyer/tenant acquires lead poisoning, the seller/ landlord can be held liable for damages caused by lead paint poisoning.*

*If you should choose to take steps to remove the lead based paint from your property, you can:*

*1. Have the painted item replaced.*

*You can replace a door or other easily removed item if you can do it without creating lead dust. Items that are difficult to remove should be replaced by professionals who will control and contain lead dust.*

*2. Cover the lead-based paint.*

*You can spray the surface with a sealant or cover it with gypsum wallboard. However, painting over lead-based paint with non-lead paint is not a long-term solution. Even though the lead-based paint may be covered by non-lead paint, the lead-based paint may continue to loosen from the surface below and create lead dust. The new paint may also partially mix with the lead-based paint, and lead dust will be released when the new paint begins to deteriorate.*

*3. Have the lead-based paint removed.*

*Have professionals trained in removing lead-based paint do this work. Each of the paint-removal methods (sandpaper, scrapers, chemicals, sandblasters, and torches or heat guns) can produce lead fumes or dust. Fumes or dust can become airborne and be inhaled or ingested. Wet methods help reduce the amount of lead dust. Removing moldings, trim, window sills, and other painted surfaces for professional paint stripping outside the home may also create dust. Be sure the professionals contain the lead dust. Wet-wipe all surfaces to remove any dust or paint chips. Wet-clean the area before re-entry.*

*You can remove a small amount of lead-based paint if you can avoid creating any dust. Make sure the surface is less than about one square foot (such as a window sill). Any job larger than about one square foot should be done by professionals. Make sure you can use a wet method (such as a liquid paint stripper).*

*4. Reduce lead dust exposure.*

*You can periodically wet mop and wipe surfaces and floors with a high phosphorous (at least 5%) cleaning solution. Wear waterproof gloves to prevent skin irritation. Avoid activities that will disturb or damage lead based paint and create dust. This is a preventive measure and is not an alternative to replacement or removal.*

*Professionals are available to remove, replace, or cover lead-based paint.*

*Contact your state and local health departments' lead poisoning prevention programs and housing authorities for information about testing labs and contractors who can safely remove lead-based paint. For more information and wealth building tips feel free to go to my website [www.lutherragsdale.com](http://www.lutherragsdale.com) or contact me at 770-217-1867.*