Checking Your Home for Lead Hazards

You can get your home checked for lead hazards in one of two ways, or both:

◆ A paint inspection tells you the lead content of every painted surface in your home. It won’t tell you whether the paint is a hazard or how you should deal with it.

◆ A risk assessment tells you if there are any sources of serious lead exposure (such as peeling paint and lead dust). It also tells you what actions to take to address these hazards.

Have qualified professionals do the work. The federal government is writing standards for inspectors and risk assessors. Some states might already have standards in place. Call your state agency for help with locating qualified professionals in your area (see page 12).

Trained professionals use a range of methods when checking your home, including:

◆ Visual inspection of paint condition and location.

◆ Lab tests of paint samples.

◆ Surface dust tests.

◆ A portable x-ray fluorescence machine.

Home test kits for lead are available, but recent studies suggest that they are not always accurate. Consumers should not rely on these tests before doing renovations or to assure safety.
What You Can Do Now To Protect Your Family

If you suspect that your house has lead hazards, you can take some immediate steps to reduce your family’s risk:

◆ If you rent, notify your landlord of peeling or chipping paint.
◆ Clean up paint chips immediately.
◆ Clean floors, window frames, window sills, and other surfaces weekly. Use a mop or sponge with warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specifically for lead. REMEMBER: NEVER MIX AMMONIA AND BLEACH PRODUCTS TOGETHER SINCE THEY CAN FORM A DANGEROUS GAS.
◆ Thoroughly rinse sponges and mop heads after cleaning dirty or dusty areas.
◆ Wash children’s hands often, especially before they eat and before nap time and bed time.
◆ Keep play areas clean. Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys, and stuffed animals regularly.
◆ Keep children from chewing window sills or other painted surfaces.
◆ Clean or remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from soil.
◆ Make sure children eat nutritious, low-fat meals high in iron and calcium, such as spinach and low-fat dairy products. Children with good diets absorb less lead.
How To Significantly Reduce Lead Hazards

In addition to day-to-day cleaning and good nutrition:

◆ You can temporarily reduce lead hazards by taking actions such as repairing damaged painted surfaces and planting grass to cover soil with high lead levels. These actions (called "interim controls") are not permanent solutions and will need ongoing attention.

◆ To permanently remove lead hazards, you must hire a lead "abatement" contractor. Abatement (or permanent hazard elimination) methods include removing, sealing, or enclosing lead-based paint with special materials. Just painting over the hazard with regular paint is not enough.

Always hire a person with special training for correcting lead problems—someone who knows how to do this work safely and has the proper equipment to clean up thoroughly. If possible, hire a certified lead abatement contractor. Certified contractors will employ qualified workers and follow strict safety rules as set by their state or by the federal government.

Call your state agency (see page 12) for help with locating qualified contractors in your area and to see if financial assistance is available.
Remodeling or Renovating a Home With Lead-Based Paint

Take precautions before you begin remodeling or renovations that disturb painted surfaces (such as scraping off paint or tearing out walls):

◆ **Have the area tested for lead-based paint.**

◆ **Do not use a dry scraper, belt-sander, propane torch, or heat gun to remove lead-based paint. These actions create large amounts of lead dust and fumes. Lead dust can remain in your home long after the work is done.**

◆ **Temporarily move your family (especially children and pregnant women) out of the apartment or house until the work is done and the area is properly cleaned. If you can't move your family, at least completely seal off the work area.**

◆ **Follow other safety measures to reduce lead hazards.** You can find out about other safety measures by calling 1-800-424-LEAD. Ask for the brochure "Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home." This brochure explains what to do before, during, and after renovations.

If you have already completed renovations or remodeling that could have released lead-based paint or dust, get your young children tested and follow the steps outlined on page 7 of this brochure.
**Other Sources of Lead**

- **Drinking water.** Your home might have plumbing with lead or lead solder. Call your local health department or water supplier to find out about testing your water. You cannot see, smell, or taste lead, and boiling your water will not get rid of lead. If you think your plumbing might have lead in it:
  - Use only cold water for drinking and cooking.
  - Run water for 15 to 30 seconds before drinking it, especially if you have not used your water for a few hours.

- **The job.** If you work with lead, you could bring it home on your hands or clothes. Shower and change clothes before coming home. Launder your clothes separately from the rest of your family’s.

- **Old painted toys and furniture.**

- **Food and liquids stored in lead crystal or lead-glazed pottery or porcelain.**

- **Lead smelters or other industries that release lead into the air.**

- **Hobbies** that use lead, such as making pottery or stained glass, or refinishing furniture.

- **Folk remedies** that contain lead, such as “greta” and “azarcon” used to treat an upset stomach.
For More Information

The National Lead Information Center
Call 1-800-LEAD-FYI to learn how to protect children from lead poisoning. For other information on lead hazards, call the center’s clearinghouse at 1-800-424-LEAD. For the hearing impaired, call TDD 1-800-526-5456 (FAX: 202-659-1392, Internet: EHC@CAIS.COM).

EPA’s Safe Drinking Water Hotline
Call 1-800-426-4791 for information about lead in drinking water.

Consumer Product Safety Commission Hotline
To request information on lead in consumer products, or to report an unsafe consumer product or a product-related injury call 1-800-638-2772. (Internet: info@cpsc.gov). For the hearing impaired, call TDD 1-800-638-8270.

Local Sources of Information
Some cities and states have their own rules for lead-based paint activities. Check with your state agency (listed below) to see if state or local laws apply to you. Most state agencies can also provide information on finding a lead abatement firm in your area, and on possible sources of financial aid for reducing lead hazards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/Region</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
<th>Missouri</th>
<th>(314) 526-4911</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>(205) 242-5662</td>
<td>Montana</td>
<td>(406) 444-3671</td>
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<td>Alaska</td>
<td>(907) 465-5352</td>
<td>Nebraska</td>
<td>(402) 471-2451</td>
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<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>(501) 661-2534</td>
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<td>Arizona</td>
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<td>New Hampshire</td>
<td>(603) 271-4507</td>
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<td>California</td>
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<td>(505) 841-8024</td>
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<td>Connecticut</td>
<td>(203) 566-5808</td>
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<td>(800) 458-1158</td>
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<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>(202) 727-9850</td>
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<td>Illinois</td>
<td>(800) 545-2200</td>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>(401) 277-3424</td>
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<td>(317) 382-6662</td>
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<td>(803) 935-7945</td>
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<td>Michigan</td>
<td>(517) 335-8885</td>
<td>West Virginia</td>
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<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>(601) 960-7463</td>
<td>Wyoming</td>
<td>(307) 777-7391</td>
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EPA Regional Offices

Your Regional EPA Office can provide further information regarding regulations and lead protection programs.

EPA Regional Offices

Region 1
Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont
John F. Kennedy Federal Building
One Congress Street
Boston, MA  02203
(617) 565-3420

Region 2
New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands
Building 5
1890 Woodbridge Avenue
Edison, NJ  08837-3679
(908) 321-6671

Region 3
Delaware, Washington DC, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia
341 Chestnut Building
Philadelphia, PA  19107
(215) 597-9800

Region 4
Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee
345 Courtland Street, NE
Atlanta, GA  30365
(404) 347-4727

Region 5
Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL  60604-3590
(312) 886-6053

Region 6
Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas
First Interstate Bank Tower
1445 Ross Avenue, 32nd Floor, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX  75202-2733
(214) 665-7244

Region 7
Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska
726 Minnesota Avenue
Kansas City, KS  66101
(913) 551-7020

Region 8
Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming
999 18th Street, Suite 500
Denver, CO  80202-2405
(303) 293-1603

Region 9
Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA  94105
(415) 744-1324

Region 10
Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Alaska
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA  98020
(206) 553-1200

CPSC Regional Offices

Eastern Regional Center
6 World Trade Center
Vesey Street, Room 350
New York, NY  10048
(212) 466-1632

Central Regional Center
230 South Dearborn Street
Room 2944
Chicago, IL  60604-1601
(312) 353-8200

Western Regional Center
600 Harrison Street, Room 245
San Francisco, CA  94107
(415) 744-2956
Simple Steps To Protect Your Family From Lead Hazards

If you think your home has high levels of lead:

◆ Get your young children tested for lead, even if they seem healthy.
◆ Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
◆ Make sure children eat healthy, low-fat foods.
◆ Get your home checked for lead hazards.
◆ Regularly clean floors, window sills, and other surfaces.
◆ Wipe soil off shoes before entering house.
◆ Talk to your landlord about fixing surfaces with peeling or chipping paint.
◆ Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling or renovating (call 1-800-424-LEAD for guidelines).
◆ Don't use a belt-sander, propane torch, dry scraper, or dry sandpaper on painted surfaces that may contain lead.
◆ Don't try to remove lead-based paint yourself.