

MINIMIZING EXPOSURE TO LEAD PAINT

How do I know if my house has lead paint? We recommend assuming that if your home was built prior to 1978 (the year those paints were banned) it contains lead-based paints.

Is all lead paint hazardous? Lead-based paint may not be hazardous if it is in good condition, and it is not on an impact or friction surface, like a window. Painted areas that are cracked or peeling should be considered hazardous and receive prompt attention.

Can lead paint be permanently removed? To permanently remove lead hazards, please consider hiring a certified lead paint specialist. They will be aware of current removal methods and have access to the specialized equipment that makes the work safer.

A certified lead paint specialist will take these precautions:

- Notify households with children under 6 and pregnant women about necessary precautions during construction.
- Use a specialized HEPA vacuum (not just a HEPA filter on a regular vacuum) when using sanders or scrapers.
- Use lead paint safety kits that include protective overalls, eye protection, gloves and dust masks.
- Refrain from eating or drinking in the work area and ensure hands are washed prior to consuming food.
- If homeowners need to stay in the home during construction, lead paint specialists will completely seal off the work zone. They will cover floors, windows and doors with thick plastic and mist areas with water to keep dust down.
- Avoid removing lead paint outdoors on windy days and make sure work areas are fully tented, including ground protection, to minimize paint particles from getting in the soil.
- Use chemical strippers to remove the paint - these are often the safest removal method.
- Clean the work area daily, mopping to keep dust down.
- Ensure clothing items are laundered often and separately from all other items.
- Provide homeowners with the proper educational materials and documentation of the work completed.

Where can you look for more information? The Housing and Urban Development department of the federal government (HUD) has a 16 page brochure featuring tips on dealing with lead paint. A downloadable copy of the brochure is available here: www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadpdf.pdf.



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Ready to learn more about minimizing lead paint exposure?
Contact Charlie Hudson, certified lead paint and remodeling specialist, at 360-354-7006.

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