

Lead-Based Paint: What You Need to Know

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We all know that lead-based paint is a health-hazard, but what do you do if you suspect lead-based paint may be present? The following how-to covers some of the basics about lead and the effects of lead poisoning.

Lowe's is happy to provide this information as a service to you.

What Does Lead Poisoning Do?

Many homes and schools built before 1978 will have some lead-based paint on the interiors and/or exteriors. Lead paint can also be found on playground equipment, boats and bridges. Exposure to lead can cause brain damage, especially in children and pregnant women.

The most common cause of exposure is from the dust generated when you sand lead-based paint or when the paint chips or peels with age:

- If the paint is chipping, contact a professional contractor who is trained in lead-based paint removal and clean up. Do not hire an amateur or do-it-yourself handyman to remove lead-based paint.
- Lead-based paint in good condition, however, does not present a problem and should not be removed unless appropriate measures are followed. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has information on lead hazard control on their Web site.



Do you have lead-based paint in your home?

What to Do if You Suspect the Home You Purchased or Would Like to Purchase Has Lead Paint

Educating yourself and hiring a professional trained in lead-based paint removal and cleanup are the most important steps you can take.

- In 1996, a federal rule went into effect regarding housing built before 1978. It states:
 - Sellers and landlords must disclose information they know on lead-based paint and/or lead-based hazards in the housing before leasing or selling it. Leases and contracts must include an information sheet which meets federal requirements about lead-based paint. Landlords and sellers must also give buyers and renters the free government pamphlet, "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home."
 - Buyers have up to 10 days to conduct a lead-based paint inspection or risk assessment at their own expense before they become obligated to a sales contract.
- It is important that someone trained and experienced perform the lead test.
- If lead is detected, don't panic. Well-maintained lead based paint does not pose a major hazard if it is left undisturbed. Removing old paint improperly can result in a more immediate hazard than simply leaving the painted area intact. You should contact an EPA or state certified lead-based paint professional on the best steps to take in protecting your family from lead poisoning

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Renovating or Remodeling of Homes with Lead-Based Paint

Take the following precautions if you are renovating or remodeling homes where you suspect lead-based paint to be present:

- Lead dust forms when lead paint is scraped, sanded or heated. Even after cleanup, settled lead dust can re-enter the air when you vacuum or sweep.
- If the renovation includes removing or disturbing lead-based paint, temporarily move your family out of the work area or home until the work is done and the area is properly cleaned.
- Make sure heat ducts are sealed before renovation begins.
- If renovation was performed in an area that may have contained lead-based paint, and appropriate precautions were not taken, consider having occupants, especially children, tested for lead poisoning.
- After renovation or remodeling, be sure to continue to maintain the paint in your home in good condition.

Safety Note: Warm mist humidifiers and steam vaporizers produce very hot water and steam. Use caution when operating them.