

Protect Your Home



If your home was built before 1978 and you have children ages six or younger, consider having your home tested. Exposure to dust from lead-based paint is the most common way to get lead poisoning.

FACT 1: Lead dust can be released when painted surfaces rub together, such as when doors, windows or drawers are opened and closed.

FACT 2: Home improvements that involve scraping, sanding or otherwise disturbing old paint can release toxic lead dust.

FACT 3: Just a few particles of dust from lead-based paint are enough to poison a child.

For Do-it-yourselfers

Whether you are renovating, repairing or painting, there are important safeguards that you should take to prevent lead dust from spreading throughout your home:

- Cover floors with plastic sheeting.
- Remove all furniture, area rugs, curtains, food, clothing and other household items until cleanup is complete.
- Items that cannot be removed from the work area should be tightly wrapped with plastic sheeting and sealed with tape.
- Turn off all forced-air heating and air-conditioning systems. Cover vents with plastic sheeting and secure the sheeting in place with tape.
- Ensure that all windows in the work area remain closed. If disturbing paint, when using a hand tool, spray water on lead-painted surfaces to keep dust from spreading.
- Spray the work surface with water to reduce the amount of dust generated.
- Do not use renovation methods that generate large amounts of lead-contaminated dust, such as:
 - Open flame burning or torching
 - Sanding, grinding, planing, needle gunning, or blasting with power tools and equipment not equipped with a shroud and HEPA vacuum attachment
 - Use a heat gun at temperatures greater than 1100°F
- Keep children and pets out of the work area.
- Clean up properly.
- Take off your shoes before leaving the work area.

- There is no way to eliminate dust, but some renovation methods make less dust than others. Use water to mist areas before sanding or scraping; scoring paint before separating components; and prying and pulling apart components instead of breaking them.
- The work area should be cleaned up daily to keep it as clean as possible. When all the work is done, the area must be cleaned up using special cleaning methods before taking down any plastic that isolates the work area from the rest of the home. The special cleaning methods should include
 - Using a HEPA vacuum to clean up dust and debris on all surfaces, followed by wet wiping and wet mopping with plenty of rinse water. When the final cleaning is done, look around. There should be no dust, paint chips, or debris in the work area. If you see any dust, paint chips or debris, re-clean the area.

For home buyers

Many homes and condominiums built before 1978 have paint that contains lead (called lead-based paint), which can pose serious health hazards. Federal law requires that individuals receive certain information before renting or buying pre-1978 housing.

What is required:

Before ratification of a contract for housing sale, sellers must:

- Give prospective buyers an **EPA-approved information pamphlet** on identifying and controlling lead-based paint hazards.
- The seller must also disclose known information such as the location of the lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards and the condition of the painted surfaces.
- Provide any records and reports on lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards which are available to the seller (for multi-unit buildings, this requirement includes records and reports concerning common areas and other units when such information was obtained as a result of a building-wide evaluation).
- **Include an attachment to the contract** (or language inserted in the contract itself), which includes a Lead Warning Statement and confirms that the seller or landlord has complied with all notification requirements. This attachment is to be provided in the same language used in the rest of the contract. Sellers and agents, as well as home buyers, must sign and date the attachment.
- Sellers must provide home buyers a 10-day period to conduct a paint inspection or risk assessment for lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards. Parties may mutually agree, in writing, to lengthen or shorten the time period for inspection. Home buyers may waive this inspection opportunity.

For detailed information or questions, contact the National Lead Information Center (NLIC). The NLIC provides information about lead hazards and their prevention. NLIC operates under a contract with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), with funding from the EPA, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

For Renters

Renovations, repair jobs and paint jobs can create significant amounts of lead-based paint dust. If your contractor will disturb lead-based paint while renovating, repairing or painting your home, he or she must be certified by the EPA or an EPA-authorized state and trained in lead-safe work practices.

There are five things you should know:

1. It is your landlord's job to keep paint in good shape.
2. If your landlord will not fix peeling paint or water damage, call your health department.
3. Make sure that workers who fix the paint do not spread lead dust. Renovators and landlords must provide important lead hazard information before the renovation, repair or painting job begins.
4. Workers should clean up well before they leave.
5. Landlords are required by law to give you information about lead before you sign the lease and at any time that your rent is raised.

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A checklist for protecting your home

- If your home was built before 1978, test your home for lead-based paint and learn about potential lead hazards.
- Keep painted surfaces well-maintained and fix any chipping or peeling paint. Use a lead-safe certified contractor for renovation, repair or painting jobs.
- Keep your home clean and as free of dust as possible-particularly around areas where painted surfaces rub together upon opening and closing, such as windows, doors and painted drawers.
- Wipe up any paint chips or visible dust with a wet sponge or rag.
- Hire an EPA lead-safe certified firm before renovating, repairing or painting your home. [Find help](#).
- If you are a do-it-yourselfer, [learn how to work lead-safe](#).
- Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers and toys often.
- Teach children to remove their shoes, and wash their hands after playing outdoors.
- Ensure that your family members eat well-balanced meals.

How to maintain your home

It is very important to properly care for all the surfaces in your home if you believe it contains lead-based paint. Lead-based paint in good condition is usually not harmful.

There are ways to clean your home that will help you reduce or prevent your family's exposure to dust:

Cleaning Uncarpeted Floors:

- Do Use:
 - Damp or wet mop
 - Standard "sponge" or "string" type mops
 - Standard vacuum cleaners, if no visible dust or debris from chipping or flaking paint is present
- Don't Use:
 - Mops with a scrubber strip attached
 - Powered buffing or polishing machines
 - Vacuums with beater bars that may wear away the painted surface

Cleaning Carpets and Rugs:

- Do Use:
 - Wet scrubbing methods to remove stains
 - Steam cleaning methods
 - Standard vacuum cleaners, if no visible dust or debris from chipping or flaking paint is present
- Don't Use:
 - Dry sweeping of surface dust and debris
 - Shaking or beating of carpets and rugs

Cleaning Other Painted Surfaces

- Do Use:
 - Soft cloths
 - An all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specifically for lead
- Don't Use:
 - Abrasive cleaners and scouring pads
 - Solvent cleaners that may dissolve the paint
 - Excessive rubbing of spots to remove them

Dusting

- Do Use:
 - Disposable, damp, non-abrasive dusting cloths
- Don't Use:
 - Dry dusting cloths

http://www.leadfreekids.org/my_home/index.php