



A Guide to Working Safely with Residential Lead Paint

If you're like most homeowners, you've probably thought about doing a painting project or some other type of home improvements. It can create a better living space, give you a sense of satisfaction, and increase the value of your home. Whether you do it yourself or hire a professional, there are safety issues to consider before starting a job. Removing paint that contains lead is the most hazardous part of a painting or home improvement project. If lead is present, it is recommended to hire a lead certified contractor who has been trained in safe lead paint removal.

Lead paint was used in homes built before 1978. It was occasionally applied to windows, doors, stairs, railings, columns, porches, siding and trim. Since these are places that often need work, many home improvements projects disturb old layers or lead paint and create lead paint dust, chips, or fumes. If lead is inhaled or ingested, it may cause lead poisoning. Lead poisoning can result in serious harm to the brain, kidneys, nervous system and red blood cells. Lead is especially dangerous to children and pregnant women.

Here are some tips for working safely with lead paint:

1. Assume that all painted surfaces are coated with lead-based paint when working in homes built before 1978 unless you have had special lead testing done by a state certified lead paint inspector.

2. Choose work methods that create the least amount of dust.

- Hand sand wetted surfaces
- Use chemical strippers (but not those containing methylene chloride)
- Use heat guns (but not those that operate above 700 degrees F)
- Consider buying or renting a HEPA vacuum which can be safely used where there is lead dust

3. Minimize and contain any dust and debris created by your work.

- Remove furniture and belongings from the work area or cover them with plastic sheeting
- Cover the floors or ground with plastic sheeting to capture dust and debris
- Turn off forced air heating and air conditioning ducts and cover them with plastic sheeting. Keep children and family members out of the work area while work is in progress and before final clean-up.
- Seal-off rooms or other sections when bigger jobs or projects could create a lot of dust and debris. When feasible, wet mist any surfaces that will be sanded and scraped to limit dust. Use a plant mister to wet the work surface before hand scraping and sanding. Mist drop cloths/plastic sheets before rolling up. Misting will suppress dust.
- Keep any dust and debris in the smallest possible area. Place all dust, debris, plastic sheeting and other disposables in heavy-duty garbage bags and throw them away. Allow only workers in the area until the job is complete. Be careful not to track dust out of the work area.
- Don't eat, drink, or smoke while in the work area. If others do the work, ensure they follow these work practices to protect your family's health and safety

4. Avoid the following work practices, which can create or spread toxic lead dust.

- Machine sanding or grinding to remove paint. Dry scraping or dry hand sanding more than 2ft of a painted surface in a room, stairwell or hallway, or more than 20ft of the exterior painted surfaces.
- Using an open flame torch or high temperature heat gun (1100F or higher) to remove paint
- Using aggregate blasting equipment to remove paint

5. Perform a thorough final clean-up by wet mopping twice using a detergent-based solution and clean water rinse or use a special vacuum equipped with a "high efficiency particulate air" (HEPA) filter to remove dust and debris. Then wet clean using a detergent-based solution and clean water rinse.

Always clean up carefully at the end of each workday

- Change work clothes and shoes before leaving the work site
- Wash hands and face immediately after leaving the work area. Shower and wash hair as soon as possible after work/cleanup is completed

At Final Clean-up

- Place all dust and chips in double garbage bags. Carefully roll or fold 6 mil plastic drop cloths inward (keeping dust from flying around) and

- discard in double garbage bags.
- Use two buckets for cleaning, one with detergent and one with clean rinse water. Wash floors, walls, etc., with an all-purpose cleaner and disposable or paper towels then rinse well. Change rinse water often.
 - Dispose of towels in plastic bags
 - Never burn leaded debris

6. To protect yourself and your family, change clothes before leaving the work area, machine wash work clothes separately, shower after finishing work, and do not eat, drink or smoke in the work area.

7. If you are not a "do-it-yourselfer," hire a qualified residential painting contractor who will follow these lead-safe work practices.

Here are the basic tools and supplies you will need to work safely with lead paint:

1. Non-permeable, puncture-resistant, disposable plastic sheeting i.e. 6 mil plastic drop cloths
2. A roll of duct tape
3. A razor or utility knife
4. A double-sided bucket or two separate buckets
5. A cotton wringer mop
6. A roll of disposable hand towels
7. Heavy-duty garbage bags
8. Wet/dry sandpaper or a wet sanding block
9. A wet misting bottle i.e., spray bottles/plant mister
10. A HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter-equipped vacuum
11. A general purpose household detergent or cleansing agent
12. Protective clothing (such as safety glasses, disposable gloves, hat, shoe covers and protective clothing)

You too can protect children and other family members by following these basic tips It's simple and easy!!

For More Information

Call your local agency:

- Solano County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (707) 784-8070

- Solano County Resource Management (Department of Environmental Health) (707) 784-6765

Web resources:

- www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/CLPPB



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