

**KEEP IT
CLEAN**

**An Insider's Guide To
Lead-Safe Painting And
Home Improvement.**

(This is the text-only download version. A full color, fold-out, illustrated version of this brochure is available for order from the Center or from the agencies that are listed at the end.)

In The Beginning

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. Lead paint was used in homes built before 1978 and extensively in homes built before 1960. 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 of 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.

The Fuss About Dust

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 leaded dust.

Play It Safe

Always follow these safety guidelines as you work.

- Keep children and pregnant women out of the work area.
- Work on one room at a time.
- Remove as much furniture as you can from the room.
- Cover remaining furniture with 6 mil plastic securely taped in place.
- Close off the work area by taping 6 mil plastic over all doors, windows, the floor, ground, and other exposed surfaces.
- Turn off forced-air heating and air conditioning systems and cover vents with 6 mil plastic securely taped in place.
- 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.
- 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.
- If others do the work, ensure they follow these work practices to protect your family's health and safety.

The Right Stuff

Using the proper equipment will help you complete the job safely.

- Protective clothing (such as safety glasses, disposable gloves, hat, shoe covers and protective clothing.)
- 6 mil plastic drop cloths.
- Duct tape.

- Mops and buckets (two)
- All purpose cleaner or cleaner made just for lead clean-up
- Spray bottles/plant misters
- Disposable rags or paper towels
- Heavy-duty plastic bags
- HEPA vacuum (call participating agencies on the back of this brochure for more information on rental or purchase in your area)

Leave The Scene Clean

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.

Take It Off, Slowly

Never use these dangerous paint-removal methods.

- Don't dry scrape.
- Don't sandblast or powerwash.
- Don't use an open flame torch or burn paint.
- Don't power sand.
- Don't use methylene chloride.
- Don't use heat guns which operate over 700 degrees F.

Get The Lead Out

Make sure to test for lead dust when your job is finished.

- Take dust samples to determine whether the final clean-up has been thorough.
- Lead dust test kits are available in many hardware stores. Kits are also available through the participating agencies listed in the back of this brochure.

For More Information

Call your local agency

- Connecticut Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (860) 509-7299
- Manchester, CT Lead Abatement Program (LAP), (860) 647-3288
- Maine Department of Environmental Protection (207) 287-2651
- New Hampshire Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (800) 897-5323 or (603) 271-4504
- Rhode Island Childhood Lead Action Project (401) 785-1310
- Vermont Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (800) 439-8550 or (802) 865-7786 (outside VT)
- New England Lead Coordinating Committee (617) 636-5443

The information in this brochure is offered to help make painting and home improvement jobs safer. The brochure does not prepare anyone to undertake lead abatement or repairs targeted at making a home lead safe. If you would like information on how to delead, do lead abatement or make your home lead-safe, please contact a participating agency listed in the brochure.