

LEAD: Risks of Home Renovation



Lead Based Paint Danger

Approximately three-quarters of the nation's housing that was built before 1978 contain some lead-based paint. Usually lead-based paint in good condition does not pose a health threat. However, lead-based paint in deteriorating conditions can pose serious health hazards. People can get lead in their bodies by inhaling lead dust or by ingesting small chips of lead paint. Even a very small amount of lead can cause harm to young children. In the United States 1 out of every 11 children has dangerous levels of blood lead. Removing lead-based paint improperly can increase the danger to your family.

Please consult the safety measures in this brochure before beginning a renovation project.

How to Protect Your Family

If you suspect you have lead-based paint, the simplest way to prevent exposure is to cover the lead paint with a low maintenance material or to replace the effected area. Drywall, siding, paneling and wallboard are commonly used to cover lead paint. A lead-sealing paint may be used to cover lead paint, though this is a temporary solution.

If you do have to remove lead paint the safest method is wet scraping or use of a chemical stripper.

Removing Lead Paint

Methods of Removal to Avoid

- ✓ Avoid torch or flame burning
- ✓ Avoid dry abrasive blasting
- ✓ Avoid onsite use of methylene chloride
- ✓ Avoid using potassium or sodium hydroxide-based solutions, except in paste form
- ✓ Avoid machine sanding, except to feather edges

Use These Simple Steps For Safe Renovation:

- ✓ Wear protective clothing, hair cover, shoes, goggles and gloves
- ✓ Wear a respirator with a HEPA filter
- ✓ Children, pregnant or nursing women or pets should not enter the work area
- ✓ Seal heating ducts, vents and grates
- ✓ Remove all furniture from room and cover floors and doors with plastic and seal with tape
- ✓ Clean area thoroughly at the end of each work day
- ✓ Wash yourself and your clothing thoroughly

Final Cleanup

- ✓ Carefully wrap the debris and cleaning materials. Keep them out of reach of children. Call the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for safe disposal methods
- ✓ Wash all surfaces after project completion and again in 24 hours
- ✓ Dust settles over a period of hours and days. Repeated wet mopping is necessary to avoid the buildup of leaded dust

Safety Tip

When renovation is complete, family members as well as workers should be tested to determine if lead exposure or lead poisoning has occurred.

The Good News

Lead exposure in adults and children is entirely preventable. Simple measures and precautions taken while renovating can prevent lead's harmful effects.

For more information on lead and lead exposure please contact:

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