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1-800-424-LEAD (5323)  
[www.epa.gov/getleadsafe](http://www.epa.gov/getleadsafe)

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April 2010







# RENOVATING, REPAIRING, OR PAINTING?

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- Is your home, your building, or the child care facility or school your children attend being renovated, repaired, or painted?
- Was your home, your building, or the child care facility or school where your children under six years of age attend built before 1978?

If the answer to these questions is YES, there are a few important things you need to know about lead-based paint.

This pamphlet provides basic facts about lead and information about lead safety when work is being done in your home, your building or the child care facility or school your children attend.

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## The Facts About Lead

- Lead can affect children's brains and developing nervous systems, causing reduced IQ, learning disabilities, and behavioral problems. Lead is also harmful to adults.
  - Lead in dust is the most common way people are exposed to lead. People can also get lead in their bodies from lead in soil or paint chips. Lead dust is often invisible.
  - Lead-based paint was used in more than 38 million homes until it was banned for residential use in 1978.
  - Projects that disturb painted surfaces can create dust and endanger you and your family. Don't let this happen to you. Follow the practices described in this pamphlet to protect you and your family.
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# WHERE DOES THE LEAD COME FROM?

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## **Dust is the main problem.**

The most common way to get lead in the body is from dust. Lead dust comes from deteriorating lead-based paint and lead-contaminated soil that gets tracked into your home. This dust may accumulate to unsafe levels. Then, normal hand-to-mouth activities, like playing and eating (especially in young children), move that dust from surfaces like floors and window sills into the body.

## **Home renovation creates dust.**

Common renovation activities like sanding, cutting, and demolition can create hazardous lead dust and chips.

## **Proper work practices protect you from the dust.**

The key to protecting yourself and your family during a renovation, repair or painting job is to use lead-safe work practices such as containing dust inside the work area, using dust-minimizing work methods, and conducting a careful cleanup, as described in this pamphlet.

## **Other sources of lead.**

Remember, lead can also come from outside soil, your water, or household items (such as lead-glazed pottery and lead crystal). Contact the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323) for more information on these sources.



# FOR PROPERTY OWNERS

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## **You have the ultimate responsibility for the safety of your family, tenants, or children in your care.**

This means properly preparing for the renovation and keeping persons out of the work area (see p. 8). It also means ensuring the contractor uses lead-safe work practices.

Federal law requires that contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb painted surfaces in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 be certified and follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination.

## **Make sure your contractor is certified, and can explain clearly the details of the job and how the contractor will minimize lead hazards during the work.**

- You can verify that a contractor is certified by checking EPA's website at [epa.gov/getleadsafe](https://www.epa.gov/getleadsafe) or by calling the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323). You can also ask to see a copy of the contractor's firm certification.
- Ask if the contractor is trained to perform lead-safe work practices and to see a copy of their training certificate.
- Ask them what lead-safe methods they will use to set up and perform the job in your home, child care facility or school.
- Ask for references from at least three recent jobs involving homes built before 1978, and speak to each personally.

## **Always make sure the contract is clear about how the work will be set up, performed, and cleaned.**

- Share the results of any previous lead tests with the contractor.
- You should specify in the contract that they follow the work practices described on pages 9 and 10 of this brochure.
- The contract should specify which parts of your home are part of the work area and specify which lead-safe work practices will be used in those areas. Remember, your contractor should confine dust and debris to the work area and should minimize spreading that dust to other areas of the home.
- The contract should also specify that the contractor will clean the work area, verify that it was cleaned adequately, and re-clean it if necessary.

## **If you think a worker is not doing what he is supposed to do or is doing something that is unsafe, you should:**

- Direct the contractor to comply with regulatory and contract requirements.
- Call your local health or building department, or
- Call EPA's hotline 1-800-424-LEAD (5323).

If your property receives housing assistance from HUD (or a state or local agency that uses HUD funds), you must follow the requirements of HUD's Lead-Safe Housing Rule and the ones described in this pamphlet.

## PREPARING FOR A RENOVATION

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### **The work areas should not be accessible to occupants while the work occurs.**

The rooms or areas where work is being done may need to be blocked off or sealed with plastic sheeting to contain any dust that is generated. Therefore, the contained area may not be available to you until the work in that room or area is complete, cleaned thoroughly, and the containment has been removed. Because you may not have access to some areas during the renovation, you should plan accordingly.

### **You may need:**

- Alternative bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen arrangements if work is occurring in those areas of your home.
- A safe place for pets because they too can be poisoned by lead and can track lead dust into other areas of the home.
- A separate pathway for the contractor from the work area to the outside in order to bring materials in and out of the home. Ideally, it should not be through the same entrance that your family uses.
- A place to store your furniture. All furniture and belongings may have to be moved from the work area while the work is being done. Items that can't be moved, such as cabinets, should be wrapped in plastic.
- To turn off forced-air heating and air conditioning systems while the work is being done. This prevents dust from spreading through vents from the work area to the rest of your home. Consider how this may affect your living arrangements.

**You may even want to move out of your home temporarily while all or part of the work is being done.**

**Child care facilities and schools may want to consider alternative accommodations for children and access to necessary facilities.**



## FOR PROPERTY OWNERS: AFTER THE WORK IS DONE

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When all the work is finished, you will want to know if your home, child care facility, or school has been cleaned up properly. Here are some ways to check.

Ask about your contractor's final cleanup check. Remember, lead dust is often invisible to the naked eye. It may still be present even if you cannot see it. The contractor must use disposable cleaning cloths to wipe the floor of the work area and compare them to a cleaning verification card to determine if the work area was adequately cleaned.

To order a cleaning verification card and detailed instructions visit the EPA lead website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) or contact the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD (5323)** or visit their website at [www.epa.gov/lead/nlic.htm](http://www.epa.gov/lead/nlic.htm).

You also may choose to have a lead-dust test. Lead-dust tests are wipe samples sent to a laboratory for analysis.

- You should specify in your contract that a lead-dust test will be done. In this case, make it clear who will do the testing.
- Testing should be done by a lead professional.

If you choose to do the testing, some EPA-recognized lead laboratories will send you a kit that allows you to collect samples and send them back to the lab for analysis.

Contact the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD (5323)** for lists of qualified professionals and EPA-recognized lead labs.

If your home, child care facility, or school fails the dust test, the area should be re-cleaned and tested again.

Where the project is done by contract, it is a good idea to specify in the contract that the contractor is responsible for re-cleaning if the home, child care facility, or school fails the test.



# EPA CONTACTS

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## EPA Regional Offices

EPA addresses residential lead hazards through several different regulations. EPA requires training and certification for conducting abatement and renovations, education about hazards associated with renovations, disclosure about known lead paint and lead hazards in housing, and sets lead-paint hazard standards.

Your Regional EPA Office can provide further information regarding lead safety and lead protection programs at [epa.gov/lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead).

### Region 1

(Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 1  
Suite 1100  
One Congress Street  
Boston, MA 02114-2023  
(888) 372-7341

### Region 2

(New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 2  
2890 Woodbridge Avenue  
Building 205, Mail Stop 225  
Edison, NJ 08837-3679  
(732) 321-6671

### Region 3

(Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, DC, West Virginia)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 3  
1650 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA  
19103-2029  
(215) 814-5000

### Region 4

(Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 4  
61 Forsyth Street, SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303-8960  
(404) 562-9900

### Region 5

(Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 5  
77 West Jackson Boulevard  
Chicago, IL 60604-3507  
(312) 886-6003

### Region 6

(Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 6  
1445 Ross Avenue,  
12th Floor  
Dallas, TX 75202-2733  
(214) 665-6444

### Region 7

(Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 7  
901 N. 5th Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
(913) 551-7003

### Region 8

(Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 8  
1595 Wynkoop Street  
Denver, CO 80202  
(303) 312-6312

### Region 9

(Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 947-8021

### Region 10

(Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington)  
Regional Lead Contact  
U.S. EPA Region 10  
1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98101-1128  
(206) 553-1200



