

# Interior Lead Paint Removal

## Guidelines

Worried about lead in your home? If you are living in an older structure you should be informed. Lead can be a serious danger. Through this fact sheet, developed for property owners, renters, and contractors, learn how to safely remove lead-based paint from the inside of your home, patch walls, and cover a surface that contains lead correctly.

## The Dangers of Lead

Lead poisoning is a concern for both children and adults. It can cause:

- Permanent problems with health, learning, and behavior in young children
- High blood pressure, kidney damage, and fertility problems in adults

You can be exposed to lead any time you breathe lead dust, fumes, or swallow anything that contains lead.

About 75% of homes built before 1978 contain some lead-based paint. The older the home the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint. You should assume that any home built before 1978 contains some lead. To be sure make sure to test your home.

You can protect yourself from lead by following the appropriate remodeling safety procedures.

## Before You Begin

Use the checklist below to ensure a safe and prepared remodeling experience.

- Identify the source in your home that caused the paint to chip or peel (ex. plumbing problems, window condensation, leaky roof, any cause of water damage, etc.).
- Be sure to fix these problems before you begin to remove or cover the old paint. Do not paint over chipping or peeling paint or

the new paint will chip off with the old paint.

- Remove everything from the work area, including furniture, so these items do not get covered with lead dust.
- Any items, such as bookcases or large furniture, that can't be taken out of the room should be covered with one mil polyethylene (poly) plastic sheeting and sealed. You can find one mil poly at most hardware stores. The poly will help protect the items from being covered in lead dust.
- Turn off all the heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems in the home. If the work is being conducted in the winter use caution when you turn off the heating so the water pipes don't freeze.
- Close, cover, and seal the registers to prevent lead dust from settling in the ducts.
- Turn off window unit air conditioners and fans in the work area.
- Cover and seal any window air conditioning units with one mil poly. Remember to uncover these when the job is completed.
- Close, cover, and seal any unused doorways in the work area with a layer of one mil poly.
- Cover the doorways you will be using by hanging a layer of one mil poly over the doorway. Seal this poly to the doorway with duct tape. Then use a utility knife to cut a six-inch foot vertical slit in the middle of the poly piece to provide access to the work area.
- Attach a second piece of poly to the top of the doorway with duct tape to act as a flap. This will limit the airflow between the work area and the rest of the house.

## On The Job

### Wet Scraping Paint

If you are going to be wet scraping paint off of a surface with an outlet, be sure to turn off the electricity at the fuse box before you mist the surface



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with water. Cover the outlet with tape to keep water out of the outlet.

- It is important to lightly mist the surface with water before you scrape off the paint. Using the water will help control the lead dust.
- Use a utility knife to score or cut the paint around the edge of the area to be scraped.
- Remove all the paint within the scored area.
- Place the scraped material in a garbage bag and seal.
- Mist the surface again, and lightly sand the edges of the scraped area to remove all the loose paint.

### Using a Paint Stripper

Some stripper products contain very strong chemicals. Wear a respirator specially designed to protect against chemical vapors when you are working with a chemical stripper. Check with a hardware or safety supply store for more information about respirators.

- Read the manufacturer's instructions before you apply the stripper. **IMPORTANT:** When you are using a chemical stripper, the work area must be vented to the outside of the house.
- After you have used the stripper to remove the paint, store the stripper and paint residue in a proper container, according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Follow the manufacturer's specific cleanup instructions for the stripper product you are using. Then continue the general cleanup of the area.

**NOTE:** It is recommended that you do not use stripper products containing methylene chloride. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has classified it as a probable cause of cancer in humans, based on studies with laboratory animals.

### Covering a Painted Surface

- Begin by making any necessary repairs to the surface being covered. Fill in holes or

other defects with spackling material or drywall compound.

- Mist or dampen any loose or chipping paint, and scrape it into a heavy-duty garbage bag and seal.
- Cut, fit and install the covering material such as drywall, paneling or fiberglass, according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Apply a continuous bead of high-grade caulk around all untaped edges, joints or other openings. This will provide a permanent seal around the covered area, to prevent any lead dust from escaping.
- If applying baseboard, seal the edges with a continuous bead of caulk. Make sure the bottom edge is tightly sealed.

### Cleanup

Once the interior paint is removed, follow the cleaning procedures in the "Lead Waste Cleanup and Disposal" fact sheet.

### How Do I Get More Information?

For more information about lead please contact the Lead Program at the Minnesota Department of Health. You can call us at (651) 201-4620, visit our website at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/lead>, or write us at the address listed on the front of this fact sheet.

Lead is a risk for both you and your family. Be informed. Be safe.

This handout was developed as a summary of the MDH lead regulations. It does not cover all situations or conditions and is not to be used as a substitute for the Minnesota Statutes and Rules. Additional federal, state and local regulations may apply. If you require this document in another format, such as large print, Braille or cassette tape, call (651) 201-4620 or 1-(800)-657-3908.

MDH TTY (651) 201-5797.

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