



for do-self or contracted repairs

## AVOID LEADED PAINT CONTAMINATION

Lead, found in all types and brands of paint made before the late-1970's, is known to be toxic to people and other animals. It can cause serious problems in children and in the developing child of a pregnant woman. Whenever you undertake a home repair project – whether you hire a contractor or do it yourself – think about whether the job might spread dust or chips from old lead-based paint around your house. **Because of their age, most houses in Cleveland Heights contain at least some lead-based paint, usually in the older, buried layers of paint on inside or outside surfaces.**

Many different kinds of routine home maintenance and repair projects can create lead dust. The most common sources of contamination are jobs that involve removing paint, sanding, patching, scraping or tearing down walls. However, if you are replacing windows, doors, or baseboards, or working with plumbing fixtures, electrical systems, or heating and ventilation duct work, you may be cutting into painted surfaces to do these jobs. In addition, when you are removing old carpeting or replacing or cleaning heating and air-conditioning ducts, it's important to take steps to prevent the spread of lead dust that may have accumulated over many years.

As of April 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency requires that paid contractors who perform renovation, repair, and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in homes built before 1978 be certified and follow "lead-safe work practices" to prevent lead contamination. (This rule does not apply to minor maintenance or repair activities where less than 20 square feet of lead-based paint is disturbed on the exterior or less than six square feet of lead-based paint is disturbed in a room; however, the EPA specifies that window replacement is *not* minor maintenance or repair.)

Homeowners who are doing renovation, repair, or painting in their own home are not covered by the regulation, but **"lead-safe work practices" should be an important part of any do-self project.** The precautions involve relatively inexpensive and practical steps, like enclosing work areas with plastic to prevent dust from being spread around your house, and washing down surfaces with special detergent after doing the work.

Here are some sources of information that can help you prepare for your project:

From the EPA:

- **Steps to Lead Safe Renovation, Repair and Painting**, a new publication covering lead-safe work practices available at <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/brochure.htm>
- **Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home**, an excellent resource available at <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrpamph.pdf> (also available in HRRC's Resource Library)
- **Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home**, a booklet available from <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadpdf.pdf>

From HRRC's Resource Library:

- "Lead-Safe Remodeling," article from the September 2004 Journal of Light Construction

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- “Controlling Lead-Based Paint during Your Paint Repair Project: Inside Projects,” how-to information for do-self projects from Home Repair Resource Center
- “Controlling Lead-Based Paint during Your Paint Repair Project: Outside Projects,” how-to information for do-self projects from Home Repair Resource Center