

Fixing Deteriorated Paint

National Center for Lead-Safe Housing - Fact Sheet #2

Why is deteriorated paint a problem? How can it safely be fixed?

Who should use this fact sheet?

This fact sheet was developed for those involved with painting, home maintenance and renovation in housing built before 1978:

- health and housing officials overseeing renovation
- painting and renovation contractors
- maintenance and property management workers
- families renovating or repainting their own homes
- providers of lead-safe maintenance and renovation training.

It can be used to supplement existing materials or serve as a checklist to verify that lead paint repair is done correctly.

Why is deteriorated paint a problem?

Deteriorated lead-based paint is dangerous. Paint can get ground into dust and swallowed by young children when they put toys and fingers in their mouths. Numerous studies link exposure to deteriorated lead-based paint and lead-contaminated dust with elevated blood lead levels in children.¹ Young children exposed to lead-contaminated dust can become very sick. Lead can cause permanent brain and nerve damage and result in learning difficulties and behavior problems.²

Prohibited practices

The following methods create such high levels of dust that they **must not** be used when working with surfaces that may contain lead paint³:

- removal of paint with an open flame torch or high temperature heat gun
- power sanding or grinding without HEPA vacuum attachments
- uncontained hydroblasting or abrasive blasting
- extensive dry scraping or sanding

Deteriorated lead-based paint is dangerous. Paint can get ground into dust and swallowed by young children.

Research shows that some traditional methods for fixing deteriorated lead-based paint can create very high levels of dust and cause harmful increases in blood lead levels.

Damaged lead paint can be repaired safely if precautions are taken to minimize, contain and clean lead dust.

¹ Lanphear BP, Weitzman M, Winter NL, Eberly S, Yakir B, Tanner M, Emond M, Matte TD (1996) Lead-contaminated house dust and urban children's blood lead levels. *Am J Public Health*. 1996 Oct. 86(10):1416-1421; Charney E, Kessler B, Farfel M, Jackson D (1983) Childhood lead poisoning. A controlled trial of the effects of dust-control measures on blood lead levels. *N Eng J Med* 309(18): 1089-1093.

² Pirkle JL, Kaufmann RB, Brody DJ, Hickman T, Gunter EW, Paschal DC (1998) Exposure of the U.S. population to lead, 1991-1994. *Environ Health Perspect* 106(11):745-750.

³ Sussel A. Protecting Workers Exposed to Lead-Based Paint Hazards. A NIOSH Report to Congress. 1997; U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Guidelines for the Evaluation and Control of Lead-Based Paint Hazards in Housing. 1995 June: Chapter 12-9; Rabinowitz M, Leviton A, Bellinger D (1985) Home refinishing, lead paint, and infant blood lead levels. *Amer J Pub Health* 75(4):403-404.

Who can repair damaged lead paint?

Workers doing the repair should have lead safety training. HUD requires training for work in pre-1978 federally assisted housing. Certain state and local governments have additional training and supervisor requirements. At the end of this fact sheet are resources for finding professionals, training programs and local requirements. Whether you do the work yourself, hire a painter or hire a lead abatement contractor, be sure that the work is done safely, following the simple steps outlined below.

How to Safely Fix Deteriorated Paint

1. Protect residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Choose work methods that create the least amount of dust.<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Do not use prohibited practices.✓ Wet surfaces while sanding or scraping.✓ Use chemical strippers, but not those containing methylene chloride.◆ Work in a manageable area, preferably one room at a time.◆ Keep children, pregnant women, and other non-workers out of the area.◆ Remove as much furniture as possible. Cover remaining furniture with plastic.◆ Cover the floors and counters near work with plastic.◆ Close doors and windows. For larger jobs, cover windows and doors with plastic.◆ Turn off HVAC and cover vents with plastic.
2. Correct the causes of paint deterioration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Repair roof leaks and other sources of moisture from outside.◆ Address sources of moisture from inside, such as poor ventilation.◆ Fix doors and windows that stick when opened and closed.◆ Make flat surfaces smooth and cleanable. For example, remove old carpeting; replace damaged linoleum; install liners on window jambs.◆ Repair structural damage, such as wood rot.
3. Protect workers and workers' families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Protect yourself while working.<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Wear safety glasses and a NIOSH-approved dust mask.✓ Wash hands and face before eating or smoking.◆ Wear shoes and coveralls that can be left in the work area.◆ Don't bring dust home.<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Change out of shoes and coveralls before leaving the work area.✓ Shower as soon as possible after work.✓ Wash work clothing separate from family laundry.
4. Clean up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Fact Sheet # 2 provides information on how to clean lead dust.<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Never dry sweep.✓ Use a vacuum with HEPA filters and wet clean thoroughly.
5. Obtain dust clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Lead professionals and home test kits are available for testing to confirm that harmful levels of lead in dust are not left behind.◆ Fact Sheet # 3 provides information about dust testing.◆ The person performing a dust test as part of clearance of a federally funded project or after abatement must be certified by a state.

Additional Resources:

To find out how to detect deteriorated paint:

HUD provides 'Visual Assessment Training'

Go to: <http://www.hud.gov/lea/training/visual/h00100.htm>

Call HUD Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control (202) 755-1785 x104

E-mail to Lead_Regulations@hud.gov

To view the HUD Guide or the HUD Training for Lead-Safe Renovation:

HUD/CDC Lead Paint Safety: A Field Guide for Painting, Home Maintenance, and Renovation Work

Go to HUD Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control web site:

<http://www.hud.gov/lea/LBPguide.pdf> or

Call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD

HUD Lead-Based Paint Training Program for Remodelers and Renovators

Go to HUD Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control web site:

http://www.hud.gov/lea/training/rr/HUD_RR_COURSE.html

For additional materials on safe painting and rehabilitation:

Go to the Alliance to End Childhood Lead Poisoning web site:

<http://www.aeclp.org/painting>

To find a trained lead abatement professional or to learn about training requirements in your area:

Call your state health department. Your state program contacts can be found at:

National Conference of State Legislatures

Lead Poisoning Prevention-State Contacts Directory

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/esnr/pbdir.htm>

National Lead Information Center

1-800-424-LEAD

Or go to www.leadlisting.org for a national listing of qualified individuals.

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