

# Lead Poisoning Prevention Program

## Home Repairs and Renovations: What You Should Know About Lead-Based Paint

Any house or apartment built before 1978 may contain lead-based paint. Most homes built before 1960 contain lead-based paint. Lead-based paint produced before 1960 contains higher concentrations of lead than paint manufactured in later years.

Lead-based paint can be on walls, ceilings, woodwork, windows, and sometimes floors. When lead-based paint on these surfaces is broken, sanded, or scraped, it breaks into tiny, sometimes invisible, pieces that your child may swallow or inhale. Even small repair and renovation jobs, including repainting projects, can create enough lead dust and chips to harm your child.

### BEFORE YOU REPAIR OR RENOVATE

BEFORE you disturb a surface with old paint on it, you should, if possible,

- Call your local health department and ask if they can test your home for lead-based paint. If the health department cannot test, ask them who can.
- If lead-based paint is found in your home, have the repair or renovation done by a worker who has been trained to protect your family and home from exposure to lead dust and chips.

### IF YOU FIND OR SUSPECT THAT LEAD-BASED PAINT IS PRESENT

You should AVOID the following activities, which can produce paint dust and chips, in areas of your home where you know or suspect there is lead-based paint:

- scraping, sanding, or using a heat gun on painted surfaces before repainting;
- making holes in walls to get at pipes or install
- tearing out walls;
- repeatedly bumping furniture or other objects into
- unnecessarily opening and closing windows with painted frames and sills.

If you must do repairs or renovations yourself in areas where you know or suspect lead-based paint is present, you SHOULD

- Move children and pregnant women to another apartment or house until work is completed and the area is properly cleaned.
- Cover exposed areas. If the area is small, such as an electrical outlet, keep that area covered until repair and cleanup are completed. If the area being worked on is large, such as entrances and ducts and to protect furniture, carpets, rugs, and floors from paint dust and chips. Dispose of the plastic carefully.
- To keep dust down, wet painted surfaces before you work on them.
- Clean up thoroughly.

- Always clean up dust and chips with wet mops or rags soaked in a solution of general all-purpose cleaner or a cleaner made specially for lead. Use two buckets-one for wash water and one for rinse water. Always wring dirty water into the wash water bucket.

-To prevent recontamination of cleaned surfaces, wash mops and rags thoroughly after each use. If this is not possible, or if you have already used the mops and rags several times, place them in plastic bags and dispose of them carefully.

- Avoid sweeping or vacuuming the work area. Sweeping spreads lead dust around. Vacuuming also spreads lead dust around, since tiny lead particles can pass through and out of ordinary vacuum cleaners.

### **IF REPAIRS OR RENOVATIONS HAVE ALREADY OCCURRED**

If repairs or renovations of areas you know or suspect contain lead-based paint have already occurred or are occurring in or around your home, you should do the following:

- Keep children away from paint dust and chips.
- Clean up all dust and chips with wet mops and rags, as described above. Pay special attention to floors and to window sills and window wells (where the bottom of the window sash rests when the window is closed).
- Close your windows if work is going on outside your home that may be scattering lead dust--for example, a neighbor scraping exterior paint. Using wet mops and rags, clean up any dust that has gotten into your home.
- Have your children under six years old tested for lead. To arrange for testing, call your doctor or your local health department.