



LEAD SAFETY, TESTING, & CONTRACTORS

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One cannot see tiny specks of lead in household dust yet just a minuscule amount can be toxic enough to poison. At greatest risk are children whose bodies and brains are still developing, as well as those with compromised immune systems. The prevalence of lead-based paint used in older housing stock up until its ban in 1978 means that many homes in our area have such potential, if invisible, hazards.

REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD HIRE A LEAD-SAFE CERTIFIED RENOVATION CONTRACTOR:

1. To help prevent learning disabilities
2. To help prevent behavior issues
3. To help prevent diminished motor skills
4. To help prevent lower intelligence
5. To help prevent hearing loss
6. To help prevent brain damage
7. To help prevent memory loss
8. To help prevent headaches

Today, there are over one million kids who have been poisoned by lead from old paint. Home repairs that create even a small amount of lead dust are enough to poison your child and put your family at risk. If you live in a home or apartment that was built before 1978, make sure you renovate right with a contractor that is Lead-Safe Certified in accordance with the new EPA guidelines for any renovation or repair project. They'll know how to protect your family.

To find a Lead-Safe Certified contractor in your area, visit epa.gov/getleadsafe or call 800-424-LEAD.

Just one sugar packet's worth of lead dust scattered evenly over an area the size of a football field is enough to poison a child playing on that surface. That might be your child or grandchild. If you do painting or repair work on pre-1978 homes, you may carry toxic lead dust home on your clothes and shoes. You might also poison your residents' children if you're doing work on a rental property that you own or manage.

The Dangers

- Abnormal fetal development
- Learning disabilities
- Lower IQ scores; memory, speech, and language problems
- Behavioral issues
- Damage to the brain and nervous system (especially in kids)
- Fertility problems
- Diminished motor skills
- Decreased bone and muscle growth and coordination; muscle and joint pain
- Kidney damage
- Hearing loss
- Memory loss
- Digestive problems
- High blood pressure
- Headaches
- In severe cases, seizures, unconsciousness, and death

It might be your child or grandchild at risk!

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You might also poison your residents' children if you're doing work on a rental property that you own or manage.

According to the EPA, over one million kids in the US currently have high blood lead levels from old lead paint in homes. Health departments and prevention programs are often responding to lead poisonings identified by blood testing. Should we wait for fires to start and things to get burned before acting? We must move together towards preventative measures aimed at controlling lead hazards in housing and minimizing risk *before* the harm is done.

Prevention is Key

- Proactively check for lead hazards in and around homes
- Establish maintenance plans that prevent hazards from arising (such as repainting often enough avoiding worn, chipped paint that more readily flakes off creating dust)
- Remediate existing lead hazards or fix dangerous problems

Home repairs that create even a small amount of lead dust are enough to put lives at risk. If you own, live in, or work in residential property(ies) built before 1978, make sure you know your legal obligations¹ and how to keep yourself and others safe.

Contractors

If a pre-'78 property requires repair or renovation that will disturb painted surfaces, inside or out, federal and state laws require that you hire a Lead-Safe Certified contractor (or become certified yourself). Details can be found on the Oregon Health Authority website, <https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/HealthyNeighborhoods/LeadPoisoning/Pages/index.aspx>. The LeadLine at 503/988-4000 can provide a list of certified contractors and explain how to be certified yourself, if you're interested.

Testing

A lead dust test is the only way to be sure that lead-contaminated dust is not present in dangerous levels. Instant spot paint test kits available at hardware and home improvement stores can provide useful information but are not as accurate as a tests analyzed by a laboratory.

You have options:

- Use a home dust test kit.
- Hire a commercial testing service. Lab analysis costs \$5 to \$20 per sample, depending on the number of samples and the laboratory you choose. Typically, two or three samples per room are adequate.
- Contact a certified lead professional. This is certainly the most expensive option and the most comprehensive.

The LeadLine at 503/988-4000 can provide referrals and information about local programs, grants, testing, and certified professionals.

Federal Regulation

Federal agencies have developed and implemented measures such as these to reduce exposure to lead hazards in housing:

- Lead Hazard Control Grant Programs enable local and state agencies to contract for lead hazard control in low-income high-risk homes. Learn more at www.portlandoregon.gov/phb/61012.
- The Federal Real Estate Notification and Disclosure Rule mandates that property owners reveal information about known lead-based paint and hazards and testing to prospective buyers and renters. (www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/fs-discl.pdf)

¹ Housing Providers' Lead-Related Obligations:

- Distribute the "Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home" booklet (available at http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/library/enforcement/pyf_eng.pdf)
- Get a disclosure form signed prior to contract (available at www.hud.gov)
- Provide the "Renovate Right"³ brochure and disclosure form prior to repairs / renovations (available at www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovaterightbrochure.pdf)
- Hire a contractor who is lead-safe certified or become certified yourself

² Federally protected classes under the Fair Housing Act include: race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status (children), and disability. Oregon law also protects marital status, source of income, sexual orientation, and domestic violence survivors. Additional protected classes have been added in particular geographic areas; visit www.FHCO.org to learn more.

- Oregon's Lead-Based Paint Activities Certification and Accreditation Program oversees the development of capacity to perform lead-based paint inspections, risk assessments, and abatement.
(<https://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyEnvironments/HealthyNeighborhoods/LeadPoisoning/Pages/index.aspx>)
- HUD's Lead Safe Housing Rule governs how lead safety must be addressed in all federally assisted housing. (www.hud.gov/offices/lead/enforcement/lshr.cfm)
- EPA Standards on Lead Dust define what is a dangerous level of lead in paint, bare soil, and interior dust. (<http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadhaz.htm>)
- EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule requires housing providers, contractors, and those who work in older homes and child-occupied facilities to take simple, low-cost precautions to avoid creating and spreading lead paint debris and dust.
(www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm)

In addition, federal, state, and local fair housing laws² protect families with children from discrimination in housing. Although lead poisoning is especially dangerous for kids, the fear poisoning or liability does not give housing providers the right to deny or discourage families with children away from pre-1978 housing. Visit FHCO.org for more about this protected class.

Questions?

Call the LeadLine: 503/988-4000. It's a free service – request a free lead test kit, learn where to get a blood-lead test, ask about Lead-Safe Certified contractors or how to become certified yourself.

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