



EPA CRACKS DOWN ON LEAD VIOLATIONS

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Late last year the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced it took action against 75 renovation contractors and others to protect people from harmful lead dust and debris exposure, as required by federal Lead-based Paint Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) regulations.

These cases show EPA is cracking down on businesses and renovators who ignore federal requirements that have been in effect for several years now. These requirements apply to many repairs and renovations done to painted surfaces in homes and daycare facilities built prior to 1978. Pre-78 properties are of concern, as they are a major source of lead exposure that can cause lead poisoning, especially in our nation's young children.

The RRP Rule, which is part of the federal Toxic Substances Control Act, is intended to ensure that owners and occupants of pre-1978 "target housing" and "child-occupied facilities" receive information on lead-based paint hazards before renovations begin, that individuals performing such renovations are properly trained and certified, and that renovators follow specifically prescribed lead-safe work practices to reduce the potential for exposure to lead for all, including workers.

Renovators are required to give the pamphlet to property owners and occupants within 60 days before starting a renovation. Housing providers, similarly, have obligations to notify residents prior to covered repairs and renovations, to share informational literature with them, including a disclosure form, and to be lead-safe certified or hire a contractor who is.

To protect yourself and your investment, it's important, that you assure the contractors you hire are in fact lead-safe certified and complying with the EPA's safe work practice requirements. To learn more about what repairs are covered and what these work-safe practices are, visit <http://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/documents/renovaterightbrochure.pdf>.

The EPA reported that rough two-thirds of the cases they recently settled involved failure to obtain EPA certification prior to conducting renovations. Over half the cases were related to violations of required safe work practice standards.

The EPA states its aim in seeking penalties against RRP violators is to help deter other violations and to level the playing field for companies that do follow the law. Such fines and settlements help eliminate the financial advantage a violator may get by underbidding competitors that are compliant.

You can read the full EPA media release here:
<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/0D3D2DBE30561BAD85257EEB00698FC7>

'Looking for a lead-safe contractor or want to become certified yourself in order to do work on your own properties? Call the Leadline for free information at 503/988-4000.

A reminder that although lead poisoning is especially dangerous for kids, the fear of lead poisoning or liability does not give housing providers the right to deny or discourage families with children away from pre-1978 housing. Familial status is a protected class under federal fair housing law¹ and doing anything to deny or discourage otherwise qualified families is illegal. Visit www.FHCO.org for more information on this topic.

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¹ 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 for more information.