

# Exterior Lead Paint Removal

## Guidelines

Worried about lead in your home? If you are living in an older establishment you should be informed. Lead can be a serious danger. Through this fact sheet, developed for property owners, renters, and contractors, learn how to safely remove exterior paint that may contain lead.

## The Dangers of Lead

Lead poisoning is a concern for both children and adults. It can cause:

- Permanent problems with health, learning, and behavior in young children
- High blood pressure, kidney damage, and fertility problems in adults

You can be exposed to lead any time you breathe lead dust, fumes, or swallow anything that contains lead.

About 75% of homes built before 1978 contain some lead-based paint. The older the home the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint. You should assume that any home built before 1978 contains some lead. To be sure make sure to test your home.

You can protect yourself from lead by following the appropriate remodeling safety procedures.

## Before You Begin

Use the checklist below to ensure a safe and prepared remodeling experience.

1. Identify the source in your home that caused the paint to chip or peel (ex. water damage from a leaky roof or gutter).
2. Be sure to fix these problems before you begin to remove or cover the old paint.
3. Use a garden hose to wash the surface before beginning work; be sure to put down landscaping fabric or an old bed sheet to catch paint chips and debris. These materials will catch large paint chips and debris while allowing the water to pass through the fabric.
4. Turn off all the heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems in the home.
5. Cover and seal openings on the outside of the building that might provide a way for lead dust and paint chips to get into the home. These openings include the clothes dryer exhaust vent, exterior air conditioning units, and all fresh air intakes for the furnace, fireplace, wood-burning stove, or other combustion appliances. Do not use the appliances while these openings are covered and sealed. Remember to uncover these fresh air intakes when the job is finished.
6. Turn off all window air conditioning units and fans in the work area.
7. Cover the outside of the window units with one mil polyethylene (poly) sheeting and seal. You can find poly sheeting at most hardware stores. Remember to remove the poly once the job is complete.
8. Close, cover, and seal all windows in the work area from the inside so lead dust won't get caught in the screens. Remove the screens if your exterior work includes the windows.
9. Cover and seal any doorways in the work area that are not being used.
10. Cover the soil around the base of the home so it won't be contaminated with lead. This involves placing one layer of six-mil poly sheeting around the foundation of the building. Then extend it outward from the base to a distance of 10 feet or to the property line. If the building is more than one story tall extend the layer to a distance of 20 feet or to the property line, whichever point is reached first. Tape the poly to the foundation of the house with duct tape.
11. Be sure to cover all sandboxes, swing sets, play areas, and gardens.
12. If using a ladder, place a sturdy piece of plywood under the ladder to prevent it from cutting through the poly. This will also provide a stable base for the ladder to prevent it from tipping.



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## Important Tips to Remember Before You Begin:

- Be sure to inform your neighbors IN ADVANCE about the painting work you will be doing on the exterior of the house. They also need to take precautions to prevent lead dust from getting into their homes.
- Do not paint over chipping or peeling paint, or the new paint will chip off with the old paint.
- It is important to set up the work area properly, so that lead dust and paint chips don't get into the home or yard.

## On the Job

1. Use a spray bottle to dampen the surface before you begin scraping. It is important to lightly mist the surface with the water; it will help control the lead dust.
2. Use a wire brush or paint scraper to scrape loose, peeling or chipping paint. Remove all paint within a two-inch area around the peeling paint. Leave any intact paint beyond this area in place.
3. Place the scraped materials in a garbage bag and seal.
4. Mist the surface again and lightly sand the edges of the scraped area to remove all loose paint.

## Important Tips to Remember On the Job

- Do not dry-sand to remove lead-based paint. Dry-sanding creates harmful lead dust.
- Do not use a heat gun at temperatures of 700 degrees or greater or an open flame torch to remove lead-based paint. This level of heat will create dangerous lead fumes.

## Cleanup

Once all the necessary exterior paint is removed, follow the cleaning procedures in the "Lead Waste Cleanup and Disposal" fact sheet.

## How Do I Get More Information?

For more information about lead please contact the Lead Program at the Minnesota Department of Health. You can call us at (651) 201-4620, visit our website at <http://www.health.state.mn.us/lead>, or write us at the address listed on the front of this fact sheet.

Lead is a risk for both you and your family. Be informed. Be safe.