

## Restricted work practices

Never use these dangerous paint-removal methods:

- open-flame burning
- dry scraping or sanding
- open abrasive blasting
- uncontained hydroblasting
- methylene chloride (for interior use)
- operating a heat gun above 1100 degrees F

## Cleanup

After work is completed, the housing unit must be thoroughly cleaned before tenants return. For small jobs, simple cleaning procedures using detergent and water will be sufficient.

For projects that generated a large amount of dust, use the following cleaning methods:

- Remove plastic sheeting, being careful not to stir up any dust that has collected.
- Vacuum the entire area using a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum.
- Wash the area with soap and water and rinse with clean water.
- Go over the entire area again with the HEPA vacuum.

IDPH recommends a final step called “clearance testing” that should be done by a licensed lead inspector or lead risk assessor. The testing involves the licensed professional taking dust wipe samples from the floor or windows in the area where the work was done. The samples are then analyzed by an accredited laboratory. If the samples are found to contain less than the regulatory limits for lead in dust, it is safe for the tenants to return. If the samples are above the limits, more cleaning needs to be done before the tenants can return. For a list of licensed professionals, contact the Department at 217-782-3517.

## Protect yourself and your family

Always clean up carefully at the end of each work day.

- Wear disposable clothing when doing work that will generate dust. Dispose of the clothing before leaving the work site.
- Wash hands and face immediately after leaving the work area and before eating, drinking or smoking.
- Shower and wash hair as soon as you return to your home.
- Wash work clothes separately to avoid contaminating non-work garments.

**Do your part to prevent lead poisoning.  
Follow lead-safe work practices.**

## Resources

Illinois Department of Public Health  
Environmental Lead Program  
525 W. Jefferson St.  
Springfield, IL 62761  
217-782-3517 • 866-909-3572  
TTY (hearing impaired use only)  
800-547-0466  
[www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/lead-poisoning-prevention](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/lead-poisoning-prevention)

### Other Publications Available

- *Work Lead Safe When Remodeling*
- *Homeowner's Abatement Guide*
- *Activities to Reduce Lead Exposure*
- *Environmental Health Facts*
- *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home*



State of Illinois  
Illinois Department of Public Health

# A Landlord's



# Guide for Working Safely With Lead

Printed by Authority of the State of Illinois

## Working safely with lead

This pamphlet presents lead-safe procedures that landlords and maintenance personnel can use to minimize lead dust when conducting repairs on residential properties. When properly implemented, these procedures can reduce the risk of lead exposure for maintenance personnel and their families as well for tenants and their families.

This pamphlet does not address lead mitigation or lead abatement. If lead-based paint is known to exist, any work that disturbs the paint must be conducted by an Illinois licensed lead professional who has completed proper training.

To obtain a list of licensed lead inspectors, risk assessors or contractors, or if you have questions about environmental lead issues, please contact the Illinois Department of Public Health's Environmental Lead Program at 217-782-3517, 866-909-3572 or TTY (hearing impaired use only) 800-547-0466. Or, you can visit the Department's Web site: [www.dph.illinois.gov](http://www.dph.illinois.gov).

## How do children get lead poisoning?

Nationally, nearly 300,000 children are lead poisoned each year. Approximately 9,000 of these children live in Illinois. Those at greatest risk are children who live in buildings built prior to 1978 because it is probable that such housing contains lead-based paint.

Lead contamination can be found in several places around a home:

- Around painted surfaces where friction or impact can create dust. This would include windows, doors, stairs, baseboards and floors. For example, opening a window that has once been painted with lead-based paint – even if that coat of paint is beneath many layers of non-lead paint – can generate lead contaminated dust. This dust can then settle on furniture, toys and the floor where it can be easily ingested by young children.
- Places where paint has deteriorated. Look for chipping or flaking paint. Children can pick up paint chips and eat them.
- Lead contaminated soil. Flaking or chipping exterior paint can create a lead problem in the soil surrounding a home. Lead contaminated soil can be brought into a home on shoes and clothing or on toys. Also, children who play in dirt contaminated with lead can be exposed if they place their unwashed hands in their mouths.

## Maintain lead-safe properties

Maintaining lead-safe housing is the best way for landlords to reduce the possibility of childhood lead poisoning occurring in one of their units. If the housing stock was built prior to 1978, here are some maintenance tips:

- Keep areas of chipping and flaking paint to a minimum by maintaining an intact coat of paint. Repair rotted or water damaged surfaces to keep paint from peeling or deteriorating.
- Tell new tenants about the presence or potential presence of lead-based paint and provide them with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency pamphlet, *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home*, as required by federal law.
- If you are going to be doing any work in a pre-1978 unit that will disturb painted surfaces, you must provide the USEPA's *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home* to your tenants and have them sign a written statement saying they received the pamphlet, as required by federal law.
- Hire a state licensed lead inspector or risk assessor to perform lead testing in your unit(s) and to make recommendations for controlling identified lead hazards.
- Plant shrubs, grass or flowers on bare soil where there is potential for lead contamination.
- If maintenance activities could create a lead hazard, be sure to follow lead-safe work practices or hire licensed professionals to do the work.

## Follow lead-safe work practices

If maintenance or renovation projects have the potential to create a lead hazard, follow these recommendations:

- Keep children and pregnant women out of the work area.
- Put plastic sheeting down in the work area to collect dust and other debris.
- Mist work areas with water to minimize dust. Activities having the potential to generate dust are sanding, scraping, window replacement, baseboard/trim removal and door replacement. A common household plant mister works well for lightly wetting work areas.
- Do not eat, drink or smoke in the work area.

For projects where large amounts of dust and debris may be generated, extra precautions should be taken in addition to the ones listed above.

- Remove furniture or cover immovable items with plastic sheeting.
- Close off work areas by taping plastic sheeting over all doors, windows and the floor.
- Turn off forced-air heating and air conditioning and cover vents with plastic sheeting.