

## *Renovating or Remodeling a Home?*

If not conducted properly, certain types of renovations can release lead from paint and dust into the air and can result in lead poisoning your kids, kids that visit, or neighbors' kids and contaminating your yard, swings, patio, etc. Guard against the improper removal of lead paint by making sure any painter you hire is going to follow safe paint removal practices. Many houses and apartments built before 1978 have paint that contains lead (called lead-based paint). Lead from paint, chips, and dust can pose serious health hazards if not taken care of properly. In most cases, lead-based paint in good condition is not a hazard. However, improperly disturbing lead-based paint can endanger you and your family. The key is to do the work using lead safe work practices including worksite containment, dust-minimizing work methods, and a careful cleanup.

Federal law requires that contractors provide lead information to residents before renovating a pre-1978 housing. Accordingly, renovators and remodelers must give you a pamphlet titled "*Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home*", before starting work. This pamphlet can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadpdf.pdf>.

Take precautions before your contractor or you begin remodeling or renovations that disturb painted surfaces (such as scraping off paint or tearing out walls):

- Consider having the area tested for lead-based paint by a certified Lead Inspector or certified Lead Risk Assessor. Contact the Texas Department of State Health Services at (888) 778-9440 to find out who is certified to do this in your area.
- Do not use a belt-sander, propane torch, heat gun, dry scraper, sandblaster, pressure washer, or dry sandpaper to remove lead-based paint. These actions create large amounts of lead dust and fumes.
- Lead dust can remain in your home long after the work is done.
- Make sure the work area is completely sealed off (including duct-work) from the rest of the home. Consider temporarily moving your family (especially children and pregnant women) out of the apartment or house until the work is done and the area is properly cleaned.
- Follow other safety measures to reduce lead hazards. You can find out about other safety measures in the EPA brochure titled "*Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home*" and can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrpamph.pdf>. This brochure explains what to do before, during, and after renovations. Also, check out the U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD) booklet "*Lead-Based Paint Safety, a Field Guide for Painting, Home Maintenance, and Renovation Work*", which can be found at <http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/training/LBPguide.pdf>.
- If you have already completed renovations or remodeling that could have released lead-based paint or dust, get your young children tested and follow the steps outlined to protect your family.
- In selecting a contractor, ask them what lead safe methods they will use to set up and perform the job in your home. Ask if the contractor is aware of the laws about lead. For example, contractors are required to provide you with a copy of EPA's lead hazard information pamphlet before beginning work and a pre-renovation disclosure form is required to be provided and signed. Finally, ask for references from at least three recent jobs involving homes built before 1978, and speak to each personally.

**FREE** ongoing Lead Safe Work Practices training aimed at renovators and remodelers is currently being sponsored by The National Paint and Coatings Association (NPCA) which follows the HUD-EPA curriculum (2003) and is the result of a cooperative agreement between the NPCA and the individual states. It is designed to be very informative for general rehabilitation workers such as drywallers, painters, carpenters, and the general homeowner handyman. Registration can be accomplished online at <http://www.lead safetraining.org> or by calling toll-free (866) 689-9484. **This training does not replace the training required to become certified in a lead discipline (i.e., lead inspection, lead risk assessment, or lead abatement) or the refresher training requirement to renew a certification.**

If your desire is to abate (remove) lead-based paint, the state of Texas requires that only state-certified lead professionals do this work. Please contact the Texas Department of State Health Services at (888) 778-9440 (toll-free in Texas) or (512) 834-6600, ext. 2434, to inquire about lead-based paint abatement or go to <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/elp> for more information. If you have questions about childhood lead poisoning, you can contact the department's Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at (800) 588-1248 (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lead>). For copies of any pamphlets mentioned above, call (800) 424-LEAD.