HOMEOWNER REPAIR GUIDE

CONTROLLING LEAD-BASED PAINT

During your paint repair project – working inside

WORKING INSIDE: SETTING UP

Dust, paint chips, and lead-contaminated trash are the main concerns of remodeling and renovation work. While all three are hazards, dust is the hardest to control. Dust contaminated with lead can cling to clothes and skin, to walls and floors, and to furniture and floor coverings. Forced-air heating and air conditioning systems will spread dust throughout the home.

PROTECT CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN

All children and pregnant women should leave the house until work is completed for the day and an effective cleanup has taken place. If the job cannot be completed in one day, the work area should be cleaned up sufficiently each day *(see "Daily Cleanup of Interior Work Sites")* to ensure that occupants have safe, uncontaminated access to sleeping areas, bathroom and kitchen facilities, and entryways after work hours.

To keep dust from spreading throughout the house, use the following precautions:

- Close off the work area with air lock flaps, created by covering each entryway with overlapping sheets of 6 mil polyethylene plastic sheeting, taped in place with duct tape. Be sure to leave windows open for proper ventilation, if necessary. Allow only those doing the work to enter the work area.
- Remove furniture, area rugs, curtains, food, clothing, and other household items until cleanup is complete. Items that cannot be removed from the work area should be tightly wrapped in 6 mil polyethylene plastic and sealed with duct tape until all work and cleanup is complete.
- Turn off forced-air heating and air conditioning systems, or at least close off all ducts that serve the work area, during remodeling or renovation. Then, cover heating and air conditioning vents with a layer of 6 mil polyethylene plastic sheeting. Tape the sheeting in place with duct tape.
- Cover openings, such as gaps around pipes and between floorboards, with plastic or duct tape to prevent lead dust from sifting down to lower floors and rising to upper floors.
- Cover all exposed surfaces that cannot be removed, such as floors, carpeting, countertops, and shelves with 6 mil polyethylene plastic sheeting, and tape in place.
- If work is being done in or near the kitchen, tape around the doors of refrigerators, stoves and cabinets to prevent dust from contaminating food and inside surfaces of food storage areas.
- If working in the project area, wear a HEPA (**H**igh **E**fficiency **P**articulate **A**ir) cartridge respirator and disposable overalls and shoe coverings. Remove these items before leaving the work area.
- Read and follow the safe work practices *(page 6)* and personal cleanup tips *(page 17)* in the EPA handbook, ***Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home.***

SANDING AND STRIPPING INTERIOR SURFACES

Preparing walls and other surfaces for painting, staining, or wallpapering can create lead exposure risks. With good work practices, the lead exposure is reduced.

- Avoid dry-sanding lead-based painted surfaces whenever possible. If you must sand, use a wet-sanding sponge.
- Wipe the area you are sanding often, and rinse the sponge in a bucket of water. Strain out any paint chips and dispose of them in heavy-duty 4 mil plastic bags. Dispose of the used wash water down the toilet. Wash the walls with TSP (trisodium phosphate), automatic dishwasher detergent, or a lead-specific cleaning agent; rinse and let dry before painting or wallpapering.
- Exercise caution when using paint strippers, since they contain volatile organic compounds (VOC's) and toxic chemicals. Ventilation is necessary, but it must be carefully arranged so as to not blow lead dust to other areas of the house. *(See "Working Inside: Setting Up," above.)*

> **WATCH YOUR STEP**
> *Be careful while wet sanding, because wet plastic can be very slippery.*

DAILY CLEANUP OF INTERIOR WORK SITES

FOR PROJECTS THAT LAST BEYOND ONE DAY

- Dispose of construction trash in heavy-duty 4 mil plastic bags. Carefully remove dust and trash from the plastic sheeting to prevent contaminating other areas. (If possible, pass the trash out a window to avoid carrying it through the house.)
- Wet-wash floors and walls, plus the ceiling (if repaired) with TSP, dishwashing detergent, or other lead-specific cleaning products. When mopping, use a disposable mop, since the mop used for this cleaning could spread lead dust if it is later used for regular cleaning. Rinse with clean water; dispose of used water down a toilet. In areas where there is little dust, or wherever wall-to-wall carpeting has been covered with plastic sheeting, vacuum with a HEPA filter-equipped vacuum cleaner. (A wet/dry model is most useful, since you can also use it to pick up water that contains dust.) Strain out any paint chips from the liquid waste and dispose of them in a heavy-duty plastic bag. Dispose of the remaining water down a toilet.
- Wet-sweep any outside areas that have lots of dust and trash by using a garden hose to spray these areas with water. Avoid dry sweeping, since it spreads lead dust. Shovel the trash into heavy-duty 4 mil plastic bags placed in cardboard boxes for support.
- Clean tools with detergent.
- Secure the work site whenever it is to be left unattended. If possible, seal off the entryways completely with 6 mil polyethylene plastic. If passage through the work area will be necessary, follow the above clean-up procedures to ensure that the occupants have safe, uncontaminated access to sleeping areas, bathroom and kitchen facilities, and entryways after work hours.

FINAL CLEANUP OF INTERIOR WORK SITES

> **TIMING**
> *Do not begin the final cleanup until at least one hour after the repair is finished.*

1. Start your cleanup work from the dirtiest part of the work area, and work toward the clean area of the house. Dispose of any debris into a heavy-duty 4 mil plastic bag.
2. Work from the top of the room toward the bottom, cleaning ceilings first, then walls, counters and floors.
3. Carefully remove any disposable plastic sheeting used to protect surfaces by rolling or folding it inward and then disposing of it into a heavy-duty 4 mil plastic bag. Vacuum the plastic sheeting covering wall-to-wall carpeting with a HEPA filter-equipped vacuum cleaner before removal. After removing the sheeting, vacuum the carpet with a HEPA filter-equipped vacuum cleaner with a beater bar attachment.
4. Vacuum any non-disposable tarps; then, roll or fold inward before removing them from the work area. If further cleaning is needed, carry the folded tarps outside and open them flat on the driveway. Once the tarps have dried thoroughly, vacuum them with a HEPA filter-equipped vacuum cleaner. Bag any paint chips in a heavy-duty 4 mil plastic bag for safe disposal. Then fold the tarps for re-use.
5. Wet-wash all floors (within at least 10 feet of the repaired surface) and other hard interior uncarpeted surfaces (within at least 5 feet in all directions from the repaired surface) with TSP, powdered automatic dishwasher detergent, or other lead-specific cleaning product. Include walls and window sills; ceilings need not be washed unless they have been repaired. Wash all horizontal surfaces three times, changing wash water with each washing. Rinse with clean water; dispose of used water down a toilet. When mopping, use a disposable mop, since a mop used for this cleaning could spread the lead dust if it is later used for regular cleaning.
6. Vacuum baseboards, chair rails, window sills, casings, shelves and countertops again, once they are dry, using a HEPA filter-equipped vacuum cleaner.
7. If the repair was made near a door opening, extend these cleanup procedures into the adjacent room.

Home Repair Resource center

Home Repair Resource Center empowers homeowners to maintain their homes for sustainable and diverse communities.

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