

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

WATCH OUT FOR LEAD BASED PAINT POISONING

NOTIFICATION

TO: OWNERS AND TENANTS OF HOUSING CONSTRUCTED BEFORE 1978

If a property was constructed before 1978, there is a possibility it contains lead-based paint.

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION CONCERNING LEAD PAINT
POISONING.

Sources of Lead Based Paint

The interiors of older homes and apartments often have layers of lead-based paint on the walls, ceilings, windowsills and doorframes. Lead-based paint and primers may also have been used on outside porches, railings, garages, fire escapes and lampposts. When the paint chips, flakes or peels off, there may be a real danger for babies and young children. Children may eat paint chips or chew on painted railings, windowsills or other items when parents are not around. Children can also ingest lead even if they do not specifically eat paint chips. For example, when children play in an area where there are loose paint chips or dust particles containing lead, they may get these particles on their hands, put their hands into their mouths, and ingest a dangerous amount of lead.

Hazards of Lead-Based Paint

Lead poisoning is dangerous--especially to children under the age of seven (7). It can eventually cause mental retardation, blindness and even death.

Symptoms of Lead-Based Paint Poisoning

Has your child been especially cranky or irritable? Is he or she eating normally? Does your child have stomachaches and vomiting? Does he or she complain about headaches? Is your child unwilling to play? These may be signs of lead poisoning. Many times though, there are no symptoms at all. Because there are no symptoms does not mean that you should not be concerned if you believe your child has been exposed to lead-based paint.

Advisability and Availability of Blood Lead Level Screening

If you suspect that your child has eaten chips of paint or someone told you this, you should take you child to the doctor or clinic for testing. If the test shows that your child has an elevated blood lead level, treatment is available Contact your doctor or local health department for help or more

information. Lead screening and treatment are available through the Medicaid Program for those who are eligible. If your child is identified as having an elevated blood lead level, you should immediately notify the Community Development or other agency to which you or your landlord is applying for rehabilitation assistance so the necessary steps can be taken to test your unit for lead-based paint hazards. If your unit does have lead-based paint, you may be eligible for assistance to abate that hazard.

Precautions to Take to Prevent Lead-Based Paint Poisoning

You can avoid lead-based paint poisoning by performing some preventive maintenance. Look at your walls, ceilings, doorframes and windowsills. Are there places where the paint is peeling, flaking, chipping, or powdering? If so, there are some things you can do immediately to protect your child:

- (a) Cover all furniture and appliances;
- (b) Get a broom or stiff brush and remove all loose pieces of paint from walls, window wells and ceilings;
- (c) Sweep up all pieces of paint and plaster and put them in a paper bag or wrap them in newspaper. Put these packages in the trash can. **DO NOT BURN THEM!**
- (d) Do not leave paint chips on the floor or in window wells. Damp mop floors and windowsills in and around the work area to remove all dust and paint particles. Keeping these areas clear of paint chips, dust and dirt is easy and very important; and
- (e) Do not allow loose paint to remain within your children's reach since children may pick loose paint off the lower part of the walls.

Homeowner Maintenance and Treatment of Lead-Based Paint Hazards

As a homeowner, you should take the necessary steps to keep your home in good shape. Water leaks from faulty plumbing, defective roofs and exterior holes or breaks may admit rain and dampness into the interior of your home. These conditions damage walls and ceilings and cause paint to peel, crack or flake. These conditions should be corrected immediately. Before repainting, all surfaces that are peeling, cracking, chipping or loose should be thoroughly cleaned by scraping or brushing the loose paint from the surface, then repainted with two (2) coats of non-lead paint. Instead of scraping and repainting, the surface may be covered with other material such as wallboard, gypsum or paneling. Beware that when lead-based paint is removed by scraping or sanding, a dust is created, which may be hazardous. The dust can enter the body either by breathing or swallowing it. The use of heat or paint removers could create a vapor or fume which may cause poisoning if inhaled over a long period of time. Whenever possible, the removal of lead-based paint should take place when there are no children or pregnant women on the premises. **SIMPLY PAINTING OVER DEFECTIVE LEAD-BASED PAINT SURFACES DOES NOT ELIMINATE**

THE HAZARD. REMEMBER THAT YOU CAN AS AN ADULT PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE PREVENTION OF LEAD POISONING. YOUR ACTIONS AND AWARENESS ABOUT THE LEAD PROBLEM CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.

Tenant and Homebuyer Responsibilities

You should immediately notify the management office or the agency through which you are purchasing your home if the unit has flaking, chipping, powdering or peeling paint, water leaks from plumbing, or a defective roof. You should cooperate with that office's effort to repair the unit.