

Prevent lead poisoning



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development

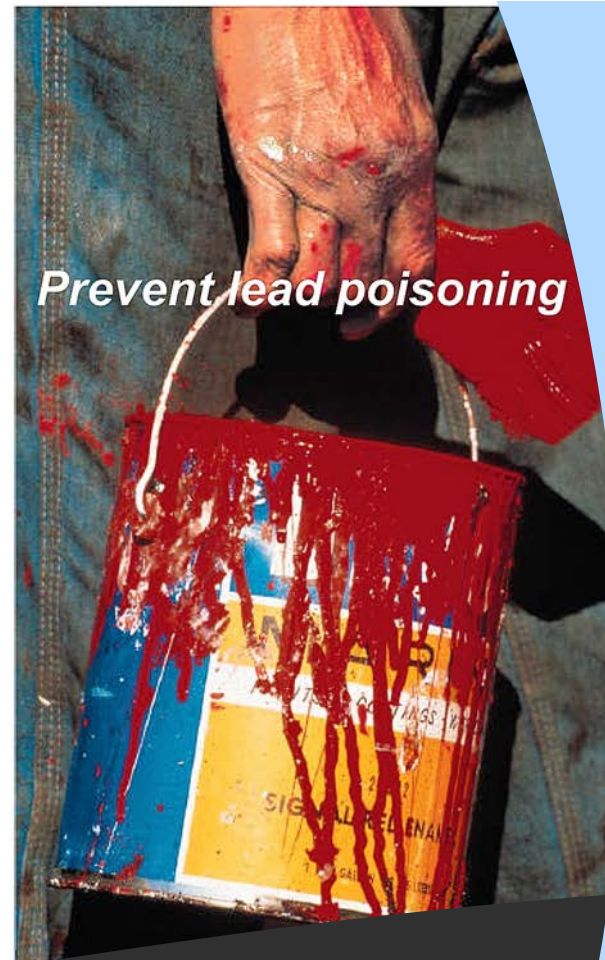
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In partnership with the USEPA Region 1, the New England Lead Coordinating Committee (NELCC), and Healthy Environments for Children Initiative, University of Connecticut

Part of the *Don't Spread Lead* campaign

Deval L. Patrick, Governor
Timothy P. Murray, Lt Governor

Joanne F. Goldstein, Secretary
George E. Noel, Director



Prevent lead poisoning

If you own property built before 1978, here are
5 reasons why you need to hire a lead-safe contractor

Homes and other structures built before 1978 may contain lead paint. If your contractor does not follow lead-safe work practices in carrying out work that disturbs lead paint, lead-containing dust may be produced. Exposure to lead dust has been shown to be a significant health hazard for both children and adults.

In Massachusetts, enforcement of EPA's Renovation Repair and Painting Rule has been delegated to the Division of Occupational Safety (DOS).

DOS' Lead-Safe Renovation regulations (454 CMR 22.00) apply to anyone who is paid to do work that disturbs more than threshold quantities of paint in or on homes, schools or childcare facilities.

This group includes:

- Painters
- Renovation and remodeling contractors
- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Maintenance workers
- Landlords

Under 454 CMR 22.00, contractors performing RRP work must use lead-safe work practices, provide owners and tenants with lead hazard information and be licensed with DOS.

If you own property built before 1978

Why you need to hire a lead-safe contractor...

1. You'll protect your children's health.

The Massachusetts Lead Regulations applying to renovation protect residents, especially young children and unborn children, from lead poisoning. Lead harms a child's developing brain and nervous system. It can cause permanent learning, behavior and medical problems. For example, lead is associated with lowered IQ, learning disabilities, and problems with attention, memory, growth, and hearing.

2. You'll protect your own health.

Lead can also cause many health problems in adults. It can raise blood pressure (and the risk of a heart attack or stroke). It can decrease brain function (making it more difficult to think, learn and remember). Lead can also increase the risk of miscarriage and cause impotence.

3. You'll maintain the safety of your home.

Contractors who are licensed in lead safety by DOS are trained to avoid creating lead hazards in your home. To become licensed, a contractor must take an eight-hour approved course. This course teaches the contractor how to:

- Set up a work space to prevent the spread of lead dust;
- Minimize and contain dust while working;
- Clean up safely after the work is completed;
- Check the work to make sure that no lead dust remains;
- Train others who work for the contractor.

4. A contractor who has made the effort to become licensed by DOS has shown professional responsibility.

A contractor who cares about your family's safety is an asset to any job.

5. It's the law.

A contractor who violates the lead regulations may be fined up to \$5,000 for each violation.

What about the cost?

A contractor who works lead-safe may charge a bit more for the job. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that its lead-safety requirements will add a relatively small amount to the cost of most jobs. The additional costs may cover some materials (such as plastic sheeting to prevent lead dust from spreading) and some extra time to set up, work and clean up safely. But careful contractors already spend time and money to complete a job safely and well; the lead regulations simply make sure that their methods are lead-safe. **Keep in mind: The cost is truly minor in comparison to the cost and heartache of poisoning a child, a family member, yourself, or even a pet.**

Before beginning work, your contractor must give you a pamphlet entitled *Renovate Right*.



To make sure that your contractor is trained in lead safety, ask to see his or her DOS license.

To find a licensed contractor near you and to learn more about the Lead Rule, visit www.mass.gov/dos.