

Reducing the Potential Hazards of Lead-based Paint

Basic Info and Why

Since 1978, it's been illegal to use lead-based paint in or on people's homes. If ingested or inhaled, lead can be extremely dangerous, causing significant mental and physical problems, and in extreme cases, death. Because of this, we are being cautious and assuming that *all* the homes we paint built prior to 1978 were painted with lead-based paint at some time, and we therefore need to follow "safe-work practices" in order to eliminate or drastically reduce potential harm.

Who is at Risk

The people who are at greatest risk for lead poisoning are children under 6 years of age and pregnant woman. We are taking great caution: our policy is that there be ***NO children under 12 years of age at the job site during prep; likewise no pregnant women.*** Adults should also take care; elevated levels of lead in adults may cause high blood pressure, digestive problems, nerve disorders, memory and concentration problems, and muscle and joint pain. If there are children under the age of 6 living in the home and/or a pregnant woman, lead dust *outside* could be a hazard to that child or woman *inside*, as people, dogs, and cats can track lead dust into the house. In such cases, we can get a hepa-filter vacuum for you to borrow during clean-up.

Safe-work Practices:

The motto of the day is "**Work Wet/Work Smart.**" Therefore, please follow these safe-work practices:

- 1. Prior to pressure washing the house, lay weed-block on the ground.** Weed-block is a fine-mesh material that will catch the paint flakes but let the water through; it is available at hardware stores, garden shops, etc. The easiest size to find is 3' wide (3' x 25 or 50'), but see if you can find 6' wide, because the flakes fly further than 3' from the house. With 3' wide fabric, place two rows with a bit of overlap along the ground next to the house in order to get close to 6' deep of coverage. It should be duct-taped to the foundation of the house, and you should have something to weight it down in several places so that it doesn't fly up, move, or get tripped on. (Pieces of 14 gauge galvanized wire bent in a "U" shape make good stakes.) For ease, begin on the side of the house that has the fewest shrubs and plants, and then move the fabric around as you progress around the house. Not only does this protect the soil from lead contamination, but it also makes for a much cleaner job site, and you won't have volunteers on their knees picking zillions of paint flakes. When pressure washing is complete, fold the two long edges of the fabric to the middle, then roll it tightly like a sleeping bag, tape it, and take it home to spread out, dry, sweep & double-bag the paint flakes, and put in the garbage; the weed block is now ready for next year!
- 2. Prior to ANY scraping, drop cloths must be on the ground** and duct-taped to the foundation. If using plastic, use at least 4 mil (less than 4 mil tears too easily..); drop cloths should extend 5' - 10' from the house.
- 3. Surfaces to be scraped must first be lightly sprayed with water.** Either every person with a scraper should have a spray bottle in the other hand OR one or two people, depending upon the number of people scraping, should be assigned to do nothing

but walk around with a sprayer of some sort, making sure all surfaces being scraped are misted frequently. Make sure the surfaces aren't being drenched; too much water will soak into the wood, in which case it will need to dry for a week prior to priming and/or painting, whereas light spray will air-dry quickly and allow for priming or painting on the same day.

4. **When scraping is finished for the day**, you have two options. (1) If you have more scraping for another day and want to reuse the drop cloth, lightly spray the accumulated chips and dust, and after gingerly sweeping them into a dustpan, put the chips and dust into doubled garbage bags, twist the top closed and tape closed with duct tape prior to throwing away. (2) If all scraping is complete and priming/painting is next, lightly spray the accumulated chips and dust, fold the two long edges of the drop cloth to the middle, roll it tightly and tape with duct tape prior to placing it into a garbage bag that you twist closed and tape with duct tape prior to throwing away.

Protect the Homeowner(s) and Family

If you or any of your crew go inside the house, please remove shoes first so you don't track dirt and lead dust into the home. Also, so that the homeowner and family can come and go without concern about tracking lead dust back into the house, don't scrape at both the front and back doors at the same time; at all times, one exterior doorway (and access to it) should be entirely free of any paint chips or dust.

While scraping is going on at the house, tell your volunteers to:

- Wash their hands and face before having a drink, eating, or stopping for a cigarette.
- Put a bandaid on if they have any cuts on their hands or arms.
- Take off their shoes before getting into the car so they don't take the lead dust home; to wipe shoes thoroughly with a wet rag, put the rag in a plastic bag, and throw away.
- Use a masking tape lint-roller liberally on their car seat when they get home to remove any dust that came off their clothes.
- Take a shower and launder their clothes separately when you get home.

Remember to *lift* ladders when moving during pressure washing; dragging them will tear the weed block and make a mess.

Protect Yourself and Your Family

It is recommended that you put your work clothes in the washing machine immediately after work-parties where there's been scraping; wash them separately from other items.

Equipment Necessary for Safe-work Practices

Weed block (6' x 25 or 6' x 50')
4 mil visqueen/plastic sheathing
duct tape
spray bottles and/or tank garden sprayer
safety glasses
heavy-duty plastic garbage bags

Safety Sheet *



Lead-based paint hazard reduction...

We assume that any house built prior to 1978 has some lead-based paint on it, and when you are scraping off old paint, it's possible you're scraping off lead-based paint. For the health and safety of the family in the house and the volunteers outside, please follow these guidelines:

There may be NO pregnant women or children under 12 years of age on the job site while scraping is in process.

Work wet/work smart: All scraping should be "wet-scraping," and any sanding should be "wet-sanding," i.e. the surface should be misted with water prior to scraping. Sanding (generally only at badly chipped door frames) should be done with a damp sanding sponge. In that way, any lead dust will not become air-born. All crews should have either a tank-sprayer or misting bottles on the job site.

When scraping, wash hands prior to having a cigarette or eating anything.

During scraping, wipe your shoes and your pants well before going into the house or getting into your car so that you don't track lead dust into your car and into your house.

Drop cloths need to be used during scraping in order to catch the paint flakes. Before sweeping them into a dust pan, lightly spray the drop cloth with water to reduce air-born dust when sweeping. Paint chips need to be double-bagged in heavy-duty garbage bags, the top twisted and folded over on itself to close, then sealed with duct-tape.

Lift ladders when you move them rather than dragging them; that way, you won't tear the drop cloth, leaving it useless to contain the chips and flakes.

Ladder safety...

The highest rung that is safe to stand on is the 3rd rung from the top. The higher rungs are to hang on to as you climb...

Many ladders have a top and a bottom; *make sure the bottom (frequently wider) is on the ground.*

Also, the rungs on many ladders today are angled for comfort and safety, so that when you go up, your feet are parallel with the ground; *make sure the ladder is turned the right way, because if it isn't, your feet could be angled down, and it wouldn't be safe.*



To be kept next to the Sign-in Roster for all volunteers to read prior to beginning work.