

Information on Lead-Based Paint

As part of the *Clean Classrooms for Carolina Kids™* program, RTI International has compiled the following information for parents, schools, and child care providers about lead-based paint; this information comes from reliable scientific and government resources. Please [contact us](#) for more information about our program.

What is lead-based paint and why is it found in some buildings?

Lead is a naturally occurring metal that was previously added to paint for durability and appearance. Paint with a high lead content is known as lead-based paint and was often used in buildings until it was banned in 1978. Lead-based paint can be present both inside and outside of buildings, such as on doors, door frames, floors, walls, and window sills.

How does exposure to lead-based paint occur?

Lead-based paint can pose a public health concern when it is not safely managed. Deteriorating lead-based paint from wear and tear or renovations can cause paint chips and lead in dust to accumulate inside. Areas outside like playgrounds can also become contaminated when exterior lead-based paint flakes or peels and gets into the soil. Children can be exposed to lead by touching surfaces, hand-to-mouth behavior, or ingesting lead paint chips, lead dust, or lead-contaminated soil.

What are the health risks from lead-based paint exposure?

Lead is a toxic metal, and there is no safe level of exposure. When lead is absorbed into the body, it damages the brain and other vital organs. Early childhood lead exposure can cause lifelong behavioral and cognitive deficits. Lead poisoning is preventable by eliminating exposure to lead hazards.

What federal efforts have been taken to reduce lead-based paint hazards?

There are a few key areas of regulation that have helped to reduce exposure to lead-based paint in the United States. An initial rule was passed in 1971 that prohibited lead-based paint in some residential structures. It was strengthened in 1978 with a ban by the Consumer Product Safety Commission on all residential uses of lead-based paint. In 1996, the Lead Disclosure Rule was passed that required the disclosure of known information on lead-based paint before the sale or lease of most housing built before 1978. Additionally, certification requirements were enacted in 1996 and 2008 that established requirements for properly training individuals conducting lead-based paint activities, such as inspections or abatement. More recently, regulations have been passed and proposed to lower the amount of lead in dust that is considered a hazard during assessment and clearance.

NATIONAL HAZARD-LEVEL STANDARDS FOR LEAD-BASED PAINT HAZARDS

Lead-based paint: 1.0 milligrams per square centimeter (mg/cm^2) or 0.5% lead by weight.

Lead dust: 10 micrograms per square foot ($\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$) for floors and 100 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$ for window sills.

Lead in soil: 400 parts per million (ppm) by weight in play areas and 1,200 ppm in bare soil in the remainder of the yard.

What actions can I take to reduce exposure to lead?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the following tips to reduce sources of lead exposure:

- Wet mop floors, windows, and surfaces weekly to remove dust from the house.
- Do not “dust” with a dry duster.
- Take off shoes before entering the home.
- Remove loose paint chips carefully with a wet wipe.
- Do not sand, scrape, or saw old painted surfaces.

Should my child be tested for lead exposure?

Visit your child’s health care provider to evaluate whether your child has been exposed to lead. The provider can give you information and test your child’s blood lead level, which is the best way to detect exposure. Some states recommend that all children receive a blood lead test at 12 and 24 months of age.

Online Resources

[EPA: Learn about Lead](#)

[EPA: Lead Poisoning and Your Children](#)

[EPA: Lead-Safe Renovations](#)

[CDC: All Children Can Be Exposed to Lead](#)

[CDC: Lead in Paint](#)

[Clean Classrooms for Carolina Kids flyer: Lead-Based Paint Terminology](#)

Federal Lead-Based Paint Regulations

1971

Requirements and funding for the control of lead in paint in federally assisted housing.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Act

1978

Consumer Product Safety Commission bans residential use of lead paint with more than 0.06% lead by weight.

Ban Residential Use

1996

Requires disclosure of known lead-based paint hazards before the lease or sale of houses built before 1978.

Lead Disclosure Rule

1996

Ensures that individuals conducting lead-based paint activities are properly trained and certified.

Training and Certification

2008

Projects with buildings built before 1978 must use certified renovators and special work practices to prevent lead-based paint disturbance.

Renovation, Repair, and Painting

Lowered Clearance Levels

2020

EPA lowers the clearance levels for the amount of lead dust that can remain after lead-based paint removal activities.

Where can I find more information and resources?

- Visit the North Carolina Health Hazards Control Unit (HHCU) [Lead Hazard Management Program website](#).
- Find a list of [certified lead-based paint professionals](#) in North Carolina.

More Information

Clean Classrooms for Carolina Kids™

<https://www.cleanwaterforuskids.org/en/carolina/contact/>

RTI International

3040 E. Cornwallis Road, P.O. Box 12194

Research Triangle Park, NC 27709-2194 USA