

safety matters

Property Management

From your safety partners at Peabody Insurance Agency

Working Around Lead-based Paint

Lead is a toxic substance that builds up in the body, posing serious health risks to those exposed to it. When you work with lead, it accumulates on your clothing and skin in the form of dust. It can be inhaled or ingested, and can damage the lungs, kidneys, nervous system, intestines and reproductive system. There is no cure for lead poisoning.

Does my Property Contain Lead-Based Paint?

Lead can be found in the paint of buildings built before 1978. The older the home, the greater the likelihood that lead is present. Of course, more recent additions to homes are less likely to contain lead-based paint and contaminated dust. Before selling, leasing or performing work on any property, check records to see if you have information about it regarding lead-based paint, and consider lead testing by a certified inspector or renovator. Under a federal disclosure law, any known information about lead-based paint must be provided to the buyer or tenant of a pre-1978 property.

Renovation, Repair and Painting

During activities such as demolition, window replacement or opening up walls, dangerous amounts of built-up lead dust can be released, putting you at risk of exposure. For this reason, firms must be certified to perform this kind of work, and must have one or more "certified renovators" assigned to jobs where lead-based paint is disturbed. Make sure everyone involved in a renovation job, including workers, supervisors and residents, has been trained in safe work practices or has proper information regarding lead-based paint. For more information on regulations on renovation, repair and painting with lead-based paint, refer to the Environmental Protection Agency's website: www.epa.gov.

Doing the Work Yourself

When a landlord works on his or her own lead-based paint-containing property, lead safe work practices must be used. If you perform any activity that disturbs lead-based paint or built-up lead dust, follow these methods.

Contain the Work Area

Contain your work area to keep occupants out and to be sure that other areas of the building are not contaminated with lead dust.

Protect Yourself

Without the right protective equipment, you may ingest or inhale lead or risk bringing it home to your family. Always wear proper protective equipment, including safety goggles, protective coveralls and shoe covers, gloves, a painter's hat and a well-fitting HEPA respirator. Thoroughly wash your hands and face whenever you stop to eat, smoke or use tobacco. Carefully remove all clothing and launder it separately before returning home for the day.

Minimize the Dust

Use wet sanders or misters to keep down dust from sanding and drilling, and never practice high-powered methods of paint removal that create excess dust.

Leave the Work Area Clean

Clean the entire area using the following methods each day, throughout the day. Wet sweep and wet mop your work area each day, changing the mop water frequently. Strain out paint chips and debris from the mop water and dispose of them in a plastic bag. Vacuum the walls, tops of doors and windows and the plastic barrier to the work area daily. Use a vacuum equipped with a HEPA filter. Dispose of your personal protective equipment before returning home or place it in a separate laundry container or plastic bag.

Crush accidents are one of the most common types of on-the-job accidents. Use these tips to stay alert and healthy on the job.

