

Renovation, Remodeling and Painting Rule Frequently Asked Questions

Who should be concerned about lead poisoning and renovation, remodeling and painting?

Any home built before 1978 could have lead paint, either on the surface, or buried beneath layers of newer paint. Persons living in homes built before 1978, especially if they have children under age six, should be aware of the risk of lead poisoning. About two-thirds of central Iowa homes were built before 1978.

Can children get lead poisoning from improper renovation, remodeling and painting practices?

Yes. Cutting, sanding, scraping and other activities can release dangerous lead paint dust, which can permanently harm all members of your household, especially children under age six. Once airborne, lead paint dust can get on many surfaces (window troughs, floors, bare soil, porch surfaces) where children play. When children put their fingers, toys or other contaminated objects in their mouths, they can become poisoned.

Don't all contractors know how to renovate, remodel and paint safely?

No, not all contractors have the skills to keep members of your household safe. According to a new law, contractors who work on homes built before 1978 or where a child under six lives or spends time (home daycares, daycare centers, preschools, and kindergartens) are required to have special training, but not all contractors have taken this training. Polk County has always required this level of training from the contractors on our projects.

How do I know if the person I hire to work for me is properly trained?

You should ask your contractor if they are certified as a "lead-safe renovator" with the State of Iowa. If they are, they will have a certificate with their picture on it.

What if I am doing the painting, remodeling or renovating myself? Do I need to be certified as a lead- safe renovator?

Individuals who are doing their own work do not have to be *certified*. But if you don't do the work properly, you risk poisoning members of your household. Polk County Health Department has a video to help you learn ways to keep your household safe. Call us at (515) 286-2221.

What kinds of practices will lead-safe renovators do to keep my household safe?

Lead-safer renovators will

- **contain** lead dust by covering floors, furniture and other items, and sealing off doors and vents with plastic, and posting signs to warn people to stay out of unsafe areas where work is being done.
- **minimize** dust by using special power tools with filters, and using "wet" sanding and scraping techniques
- **clean up** debris, chips and dust on all surfaces with a special HEPA vacuum, and using a wet mop with lots of rinse water. A contractor will have to do a test before finishing the project to make sure dust is within to safe levels

If the person repairing my home does not use power tools, do I still need to worry about the possibility of lead poisoning?

Many activities can release dangerous lead paint chips and dust, including repairing windows, removing a door or window or demolishing walls. Your contractor should be a lead-safe renovator

whenever lead paint is disturbed, with or without power tools.

Am I breaking the law if I hire a contractor who isn't a lead-safe renovator?

No. You are not breaking the law, but your contractor risks fines or other penalties. But much worse than that, if you hire someone without the right training, you risk the long-term health and safety of your family.

I have a volunteer organization coming to paint, remodel or renovate my home. Do these groups need to be *lead-safe renovators*?

Yes. By law, even those who are not being paid need be certified as lead-safe renovators. That means volunteer groups and non-profit agencies (such as *Habitat for Humanity*) will need to have an appropriate level of certification, and make sure their workers receive proper training.

Are there any programs to help me fix lead hazards in my home or the properties I own?

Some owners and landlords may qualify for a special program in Polk and Dallas Counties to provide financial assistance to repair lead paint hazards in homes built before 1978, where a child under age six lives. Some income qualifications apply. Call Polk County Health Department at 286- 2115 for more information.

Where can I get more information about this law?

Contact the Iowa Department of Public Health, Bureau of Lead Poisoning Prevention at 800-972-2026.