

NEWS RELEASE



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Christine Stone: 971-673-1282, desk; 503-602-1282, cell;

Contact: Christine.I.stone@state.or.us.

New lead-based paint rules will protect against poisonings

Rules will affect renovations of homes and child-occupied places built before 1978

Oregonians will be more protected from lead-based paint hazards thanks to new federal rules about renovation of older homes as well as facilities occupied by children. The new rules are being administered jointly by Oregon Public Health and the Construction Contractors Board.

The new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule applies to renovators and maintenance professionals that do work in housing, child care facilities and schools built before 1978. Renovation of these structures must be done by trained and certified renovation firms using lead-safe work practices. Renovation is defined as any activity that disturbs painted surfaces such as sanding, scraping, or removal of walls, ceilings or windows.

Most homes and other structures built before 1978 contain lead paint. When lead paint is disturbed, the debris and dust can spread into the environment and be ingested by children. Exposure to lead can affect the mental and physical development of children, especially those under the age of 6. In Oregon and in several other states, data has shown that nearly half of all childhood lead poisoning cases are related to renovation and remodeling of older homes.

“This new rule addresses one of the last major sources of lead poisoning in children, lead-based paint in older structures. It is important that Oregonians are aware of this change when they are considering having a contractor renovate their home,” says Richard Leiker, Oregon Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program manager.

“Our goal in issuing these new rules is simple: We want contractors to take steps to prevent lead exposure risks during renovations, especially when children are around,” said Wallace Reid from the EPA Region 10 lead program in Seattle. “We appreciate Oregon’s initiative and see an opportunity here to step up awareness and prevent negative health impacts.”

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For more detail about the new EPA rules, please visit www.healthoregon.org/lead.

The rule does not apply to smaller renovation or repair projects that disturb six square feet or less of interior surface or 20 square feet or less of exterior paint. The rule also does not apply to homeowners that choose to do their own renovations. However, public health officials urge homeowners and those doing smaller renovation projects to exercise great caution.

Oregon became the eighth state to be authorized by EPA to manage the Renovation, Repair and Painting Rule. Oregon is also authorized to administer EPA's Pre-Renovation Education program that requires contractors to distribute a lead hazard information pamphlet to owners and occupants before conducting renovations in pre-1978 housing and child-occupied facilities.

In Oregon, these new rules will be jointly administered and enforced by the Construction Contractors Board (CCB) and the Oregon Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program. The contractors board will manage the program for all licensed contractors. Oregon Public Health will administer the program for all others that are not licensed by the CCB and also will accredit programs that offer renovation training classes.

Again, to learn more about this new rule, including certification, licensing, training and lists of certified/licensed renovation firms, contact the CCB at 503-378-4621 or visit www.oregon.gov/CCB. You can also contact the Oregon Public Health Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 971-673- 0440 or www.healthoregon.org/lead.

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