

# safety matters

Construction  
Toolbox Talks for

From your safety partners at Corkill Insurance Agency, Inc.

## Safety Tips for Dealing with Lead

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.

### How Might I Be Exposed?

Lead can be found in the paint and pipes of buildings built before 1978. 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.

In order to do work on houses that contain lead-based paint, our firm has been certified. This means we are expected to uphold certain standards to protect you and the occupants of the building. Study the following work practices that minimize the risk of lead poisoning.

### 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.

- Create a sealed air lock at the entrance to the area in which you are working, and at the vents and heating ducts.
- Remove everything, including furniture, from the work area. If an item is too large to move, cover it with heavy plastic sheeting secured with tape.

- Cover floors with heavy plastic sheeting.
- Cover doors with two layers of protective sheeting: one with a vertical slit, and one overlapping layer hung from the top of the doorframe.

### Protect Yourself

Without the right protective equipment, you may ingest or inhale lead or risk bringing it home to your family. Always wear the following equipment:

- Safety goggles
- Disposable protective coveralls
- Disposable shoe covers
- Gloves
- Painter's hat
- Properly fitting HEPA respirator

Thoroughly wash your hands and face whenever you stop to eat, drink, smoke or use tobacco. Carefully remove all clothing and launder it separately before returning home.

### Minimize the Dust

- Use wet sanders or misters to keep down dust from sanding and drilling.
- Use HEPA vacuum attachments when you are able.
- When a heat gun is necessary, use a low temperature setting.

**Lead can be found in the paint of buildings built before 1978. Follow these practices to protect yourself and the occupants of the building from exposure.**



- Pry and pull apart components instead of pounding and hammering.
- Never use open-flame burning or torching of lead-based paint, and never use high-speed sanders or grinders without HEPA exhaust control.

### **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 debris from the mop water and dispose of them.
- 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 or place it in a separate laundry container or plastic bag.
- Continue to keep the work area completely separate from the rest of the building.