Lead Paint Management

Inhalation and ingestion of lead is known to be harmful to humans, especially to children. As a result, a number of regulations are in effect to reduce exposures to lead. One of the most common sources of lead in our environment is from lead paint chips. This Fact Sheet addresses ways for our University to comply with the related lead paint regulations and to ensure a safe environment for our campus.

Lead was banned in paint sold in the United States in 1978. No doubt remaining stocks of paint were used after that date and may also present behind more recent coats of paint.

It is important not to disturb peeling lead paint, in order to prevent it from entering the environment. There are a number of ways to test for lead paint content. The easiest and fastest is with a direct-reading tube, pictured to the left. Results can be obtained immediately with this option. For larger scale evaluations, a consultant must be contacted who will perform testing with an X-ray device. In the event of conflicting results, samples of the lead may be sent to a laboratory for analysis. EH&S can assist with the lead determinations in any of these circumstances.

Summary of Requirement for Lead Paint Management

1. Never disturb any peeling paint until you have determined that it is NOT lead-containing. Carnegie Mellon personnel are not permitted to disturb lead-containing paint.

2. Contact EH&S to determine the lead content of any paint material that must be disturbed.

3. If lead is found in the paint material, an outside contractor, approved for lead abatement by Carnegie Mellon EH&S must remove or otherwise address this hazard.

4. There is no general university funding for the abatement of lead paint. The costs will need to be borne by the applicable project or department.

5. See the other side of this sheet for a summary of the process of lead abatement.
Contracts with Lead Abatement firms are managed through the Facilities Management Services. Contact Keri Schultheis at 8-7511 for information regarding them.

The lead abatement process is similar to that for asbestos abatement, in that the work area is isolated in poly sheeting, workers must don personal protective equipment, and monitoring of conditions inside and outside the work area are required. In the above picture on the left, you see a properly protected worker in the enclosed work area. In the photo on the right, you see the restrictions posted for the work area.

Clearance testing is required following lead abatement, though not an air test like is used for asbestos abatement. Clearance tests for lead work involve wipes of the surfaces abated. These wipe samples are analyzed by a laboratory and must meet strict clearance levels.

In the photo on the left, you see a wipe sample being collected. The surface for each wipe is to be one square foot (hence the square template outlined by tape.) Preparing the template becomes more difficult when samples are collected on window sills, or wood trim!

Our Mission:

Environmental Health & Safety (EH&S) is committed to providing health and safety services that protect the University community and the environment.