

LET'S REMODEL

Testing needed to check lead problems

Q: In planning a major remodel of our pre-1978 constructed home, what needs to be considered regarding lead (Pb) in existing painted surfaces?

A: Your inquiry is certainly timely and of growing interest to homeowners, due to the new federal regulations related to disclosure of lead (Pb) in pre 1978 housing, which are scheduled to go into effect this year.

The U.S. E.P.A. has recently issued final rules (published 3-6-96 in the Federal Register) regarding the disclosure of lead based paint in residential housing. E.P.A. and Consumer Protection studies suggest that exposure to deteriorating lead-based paint, lead in soils and dust are several of the major sources of human exposure to lead.

Consequently, the provisions of the E.P.A.'s final rules for Lead Paint Hazards in Housing are intended to provide the consuming public specific information regarding the potential for a lead hazard exposure in their home environment.

Prior to a specific limitation on the quantity of lead used in the composition of paint being instituted in 1978, lead was a very common component of both interior and exterior paints. Flak-



ing paints and dust from wear on high contact areas (door and window frames) are the two common areas of high potential for lead exposure.

However, in your specific case, where major remodeling activity is anticipated, there does exist the probability that various remodeling tasks may create a lead hazard. Those remodeling activities usually include demolition, scraping, grinding or sanding of existing painted surfaces (both interior and exterior).

The only way to ascertain whether your project may be impacted by the

existing lead paint regulations is by a definitive testing program for lead on the suspect materials. Once the testing has confirmed the presence (or absence) of lead, then both you and your selected contractor can prepare a reasonable, cost effective solution to dealing with any paints known to contain lead.

In addition, older homes should have the plumbing (especially the potable water piping) reviewed for potential sources of lead exposure.

Mark Mastrangel, president, Control Engineering & Technology Inc., Franklin, (810) 338-8388.

For your home improvement questions or a copy of our roster book contact Gayle Walters, executive director of NARI-The Michigan Remodeling Association at 810-335-3232. Questions can be mailed to "Let's Remodel," 2187 Orchard Lake Road, Suite 103, Sylvan Lake, MI 48320.

Answers are provided by members of the MRA, the local chapter of the National Association of the Remodeling Industry. Members include professional contractors, manufacturers, wholesalers, consultants and lenders representing all facets of residential and light commercial remodeling.

Members also answer questions on "Construction Talk" with Murray Gula on WEXL-AM 1340, 1-2 p.m. Saturdays. Call in your questions at 810-544-1340.

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