



LEAD PAINT



Homes painted between 1960 and 1990 may have small amounts of lead in some of the painted indoor surfaces. Highest amounts of lead were used in exterior paints. If you would like to test the paint in your house free Lead Paint test kits are available at M^oMunn and Yates.

It is not always in your best interest to remove lead-based paint. In some situations, leaving the painted surface alone, (as long as it is not chipping or within the reach of children), is safer than trying to remove it. Covering the painted area with vinyl wallpaper, wallboard or paneling can provide extra safety.

However, lead-based paint in your home is a serious health hazard if it is chipping or flaking, or if it is within the reach of children who might chew on it. In these cases, you should remove the paint.

It is not safe to use sanders, heat guns or blowlamps to remove lead-based paint. These methods create lead-contaminated dust, chips, flakes and fumes that can be breathed in or swallowed.

You should consider hiring an expert to do the job. However, if you decide to do it yourself, use a chemical paint stripper, like Lepage paint and varnish remover or Circa 1850 paint stripper. Chemical paint strippers may contain potentially harmful substances themselves, so always read the warning labels and instructions carefully before each use, and follow these general guidelines:

Keep children and pregnant women away from the work area.

Remove furnishings from the work area. Use plastic sheeting to completely cover anything that cannot be moved.

Isolate the work area by covering doorways and vents with plastic sheeting and tape. This will prevent the spread of paint scrapings to other parts of the house.

Before starting work, make sure the room is properly ventilated. Set up a fan so it blows air out through an open window. Start by applying paint stripper near the fan and work your way back, so the fumes are always blowing away from you.

Always wear goggles, gloves, protective clothing and a good quality breathing mask. If you get any paint stripper on your skin or in your eyes, wash it off right away.

Work for about ten minutes at a time, then take a break outdoors in the fresh air. Leave the work area right away if you have trouble breathing, get a headache, or feel dizzy or sick.

Never eat, drink or smoke while removing paint, and keep anything that might cause a spark or static electricity out of the work area.

Clean the work area thoroughly at the end of each day. Put paint scrapings and chips in a sealed container marked Hazardous Waste. Then wipe down the work area with a clean damp cloth, and throw the cloth away. Do not throw out paint scrapings with the regular trash. Your local municipality can tell you the best way to dispose of old paint scrapings and other hazardous household wastes.

