

What Homeowners Need To Know About Lead Paint

The [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting](#) rule governing the work of professional remodelers in homes where there is lead-based paint was published in the Federal Register on Earth Day, April 22. The rule took effect in April 2010.

The rule addresses remodeling and renovation projects disturbing more than six square feet of potentially contaminated painted surfaces for all residential and multifamily structures built prior to 1978 that are inhabited or frequented by pregnant women and children under the age of six.

The EPA rule lists prohibited work practices — including open-torch burning and using high-heat guns and high-speed equipment such as grinders and sanders unless equipped with a HEPA filter. It also requires a cleaning inspection after the work is completed.

Additionally, the rule establishes required lead-safe work practices, including posting warning signs for occupants and visitors; using disposable plastic drop cloths; cleaning the work area with HEPA vacuuming and wet washing; and individual certification through a training course.

The full rule and brochures for consumers can be downloaded from the EPA's [Web site](#).

A 2006 NAHB study on lead-safe work practices showed that a home was better off after a remodel than before, as long as the work was performed by trained remodelers who clean the work area with HEPA-equipped vacuums, wet washing and disposable drop cloths.

Summary of the Rule

1. Training and Certification

Beginning in April 2010, remodeling firms working in pre-1978 homes will need to be certified. In addition to firm certification, an employee will also

need to be a Certified Renovator. When hiring a remodeler, home owners should verify the company is certified and employs a Certified Renovator to be sure the work is completed properly.

2. Work Practices

Once work starts on a pre-1978 renovation, the Certified Renovator has a number of responsibilities. Beginning with distributing EPA's [Renovate Right](#) brochure to the homeowner and having them sign the pre-renovation form in the booklet. Before the work starts the Certified Renovator will post warning signs outside the work area and supervise setting up containment to prevent spreading dust.

The rule lists specific containment procedures for both interior and exterior projects. It forbids certain work practices including open flame or torch burning, use of a heat gun that exceeds 1100°F, and high-speed sanding and grinding unless the tool is equipped with a HEPA exhaust control. Once the work is completed, the regulation specifies cleaning and waste disposal procedures. Clean up procedures must be supervised by a Certified Renovator.

3. Verification and Record Keeping

After clean up is complete the Certified Renovator must verify by matching a cleaning cloth with an EPA verification card. If the cloth appears dirtier or darker than the card, the cleaning must be repeated.

A complete file of records on the project must be kept by the certified renovator for three years. These records include, but aren't limited to: verification of owner/occupant receipt of the *Renovate Right* pamphlet or attempt to inform, documentation of work practices, Certified Renovator certification, and proof of worker training.

4. Exemptions

It is important to note that these work practices may be waived under these conditions:

- The home or child occupied facility was built after 1978.
- The repairs are minor, with interior work disturbing less than six sq. ft. or exteriors disturbing less than 20 sq. ft.
- The homeowner may also opt out by signing a waiver if there are no children under age six frequently visiting the property, no one in the home is pregnant, or the property is not a child-occupied facility.
- If the house or components test lead free by a Certified Risk Assessor, Lead Inspector, or Certified Renovator.

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Learn more about EPA's lead paint rule by visiting www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm or by downloading the pamphlet, [Renovate Right](#).

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