

Update Your Home Safely with a Lead-Safe Certified Renovator

You've made the decision to finally remodel the outdated kitchen and living room of your home. But if you live in a house built before 1978, a new federal law regulating the removal of lead paint will affect your home remodeling project.

In 1978, the use of lead paint was officially banned from residential construction. Before that, however, lead paint was used in more than 38 million homes, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Today, contractors hired to do renovation, repair and painting projects that will involve at least 6 square feet of lead-based paint in homes built before 1978 must be Lead-Safe certified by Wisconsin's Dept. of Health Services, and must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination.

Of course, 6 square feet is smaller than the average window – which means that pretty much every remodeling job will have to comply with this new requirement.

The Dangers of Lead Paint

For young children, lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, hearing loss and behavior problems. In adults, lead poisoning can lead to hypertension and high blood pressure. Pregnant women run the risk of passing the poison on to their unborn child.

It is important that you find a remodeler who is trained in lead-safe work practices rather than try to do the work yourself. Not only that, but it's the law: Contractors working in pre-1978 homes *must* be lead-paint certified and *must* follow these lead-safe practices whether or not there are children in the home – unless the home owner can certify that the house is lead-paint free.

What are Lead-Safe Work Practices?

[Wisconsin's DHS Lead-Safe website—www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/) provides guidance to home owners and contractors about remodeling safely to minimize lead dust exposure. Lead-Safe Certified Renovators have been equipped to educate consumers about the dangers of lead, and use prescribed lead-safe work practices. Your certified contractor should also give you this brochure to familiarize you with specific work practices, including these procedures:

1. Containing the work area so that dust and debris do not escape. Warning signs will be posted to keep visitors away from the area and heavy-duty plastic and tape are used to seal off doors and heating and cooling system vents and to cover the floors and any furniture that cannot be moved.
2. Minimizing dust. There is no way to eliminate it, but some paint removal methods create less dust than others. For example, using water to mist areas before sanding or scraping and prying and pulling apart components can reduce dust. It's also prohibited to use open flame burning or torching; sanding, grinding, planing, needle gunning, or blasting with power tools and equipment not equipped with a shroud and high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter vacuum attachment; or using a heat gun at temperatures greater than 1100°F.
3. Cleaning up thoroughly. When all the work is done, and before taking down any plastic that isolates the work area from the rest of the home, the area will be cleaned with a HEPA vacuum to remove dust and debris on all surfaces, followed by wet mopping with plenty of water.

To find a Lead-Safe Certified Renovator or firm near you, contact **Heart of the North Builders Association at 715-736-4622** or visit <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/CompanyList/LeadSafeCompany.pdf>