Protecting yourself

- Wash your face and hands carefully before eating food or smoking and change out of contaminated overalls (especially if dry sanding) when not actually working. Wash contaminated clothes separately.
- Wash your face and hands and change out of contaminated clothing before handling children.
- Wear a hat or cover your hair (especially when dry sanding) to prevent dust accumulating in the hair.
- Wear a good quality, properly-fitted, toxic dust respirator when sanding, making dust, or burning off lead-based paint. If using a disposable type, only those with double headstraps are suitable. Respirators should meet the requirements of the New Zealand/Australian Standard NZS/AS 1716-2003 (Respiratory Protective Devices).
- Do not smoke while removing paint as the hand to mouth contact may increase the risk of eating or inhaling lead paint dust.

Methods of removing paint

Method	Safety measures
Wet sanding: This is the preferred option to reduce dust.	Ensure that any residue is cleaned up.
Scraping:	Ensure any debris is collected and the area cleaned up.
Abrasive blasting: Check any Department of Labour (DOL) or regional council requirements.	NOT to be used for properties and structures built or painted before 1970 or for boats because of the lead content of the paint and the large amounts of uncontrolled dust generated.
Blasting with heat: An electric paint stripper, hot air blower or blow torch will heat the paint and blister it, so that it can be scraped off. Note that the use of a blow torch will produce lead fumes. Beware also of fire risk.	Wear a toxic dust respirator if using a hot air blower, blow torch or electric paint stripper. Have a fire extinguisher or water handy in case of fire. If using a blow torch indoors, make sure that windows are open.
Chemicals: Usually used for small surfaces such as window frames.	Wear safety glasses, overalls and gloves to avoid contact with the skin. Keep the room well ventilated. Follow any instructions on the label.
Dry sanding by hand or machine: The machines include orbital sanders, disc grinder sanders, pistol grip disc sanders and belt sanders. They will generate large amounts of dust.	If you use any type of machine, wear a toxic dust respirator. This is important even when using a belt sander with an extraction bag (only partially effective). Cover ground/carpets with a dust sheet. Keep children and pets away from work area.
Waterblasting: For outside surfaces.	Clean up paint flakes. Use water to flush debris to a collection point for disposal. Prevent flakes spreading to other properties.

Effect of lead on the garden

Vegetables and fruit grown in soil contaminated by lead-based paint are safe to eat as long as they are carefully washed to remove dust and soil from the leaves on the outside of the plant.

If safety precautions haven't been taken, soil may be contaminated and the top layer may need to be removed.

Further information

If you need information on occupational safety and health matters, contact your nearest Department of Labour (DOL) office.

If you require information on technical aspects of painting, contact the representative of a paint manufacturer.

If you need further information on lead poisoning contact the Health Protection Officer in the public health unit of your local DHB.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH
MANATŪ HAUORA

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR
TE TARI MAHI

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PAINTING

Lead-Based Paint



RE PAINTING



- *The removal of lead-based paint can result in harm to both the person doing the job and the people who live or work nearby.*
- *Untreated lead poisoning can lead to brain damage or even death.*

The purpose of this leaflet is to alert homeowners and painting contractors to the hazards associated with removing lead-based paint.

The dangers of lead-based paint

You can get lead poisoning if you do not take care when you remove lead-based paint from the inside or outside of a building. Children, especially pre schoolers, are particularly at risk from lead poisoning. Small children may swallow paint chips and contaminated soil, especially when playing outdoors. Their hands, toys or food may be contaminated and the lead swallowed when they are playing or eating. Contaminated soil can be brought indoors by animals or on people's clothes and shoes.

Until 1965, many paints on the New Zealand market had high lead levels. This was particularly true of pre-1945 paints. Even if a building has been recently painted, it may have been painted with lead-based paints or have layers of old paint covered by modern paint. Today only special purpose paints contain lead and these are clearly labelled.

It's not possible to tell lead-based paints by their appearance, but there is a simple test that can detect whether the paint is a health risk. If a building is over 25 years old it is best to presume that it has been painted with lead-based paint. Contact the Health Protection Officer in your local public health unit if you are unsure.

Health and safety

The "Health and Safety in Employment Act" requires employers to provide a safe working environment for employees. Employees and self-employed people are also required to protect themselves and others from harm. This includes contractors.

The removal of lead-based paint from a building is capable of resulting in harm to both the person doing the job and the occupants of the building. Young children who may swallow lead flakes are especially at risk. Unborn children can also be affected when the mother has lead poisoning and the lead is passed to the baby across the placenta.

Therefore precautions must be taken to reduce the risk of lead poisoning.

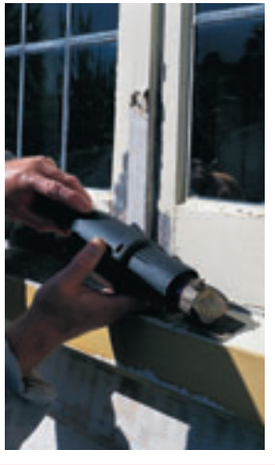
Lead poisoning

Effects:

- Many adults and children with lead poisoning will have either very vague or non-specific symptoms such as stomach pains, difficulty sleeping, constipation and loss of appetite or no symptoms at all.
- Children who may have no obvious symptoms can still suffer some brain damage over a period of time.
- If your child has more severe symptoms such as weakness or difficulty walking seek urgent medical attention.
- Untreated lead poisoning in both adults and children can be fatal.

What to do:

If you think your child may have been exposed to paint dust, flakes of old paint, soil with paint dust in it, or may have chewed some old paint, you should ask your doctor to check the child's blood lead level.



Pets often show symptoms of lead poisoning before people. If your pet is unwell and a vet diagnoses lead poisoning, you should see that all members of your household are checked by a doctor.

Safety points for removing lead-based paint



Whatever method you use for removing lead-based paint, always take the following precautions:

- If you're removing paint from the inside of your house, remove the curtains and furniture from the room and cover the carpets before beginning the job. After sanding, wet wipe surfaces to remove dust and then use a commercial vacuum cleaner fitted with a high efficiency dust filter.
- If you're removing the paint from the outside of a building, make sure all windows and doors are closed to prevent contamination inside.
- Collect all paint debris on a ground sheet large enough to contain all the debris. If you're working on a scaffold, tie a sheet underneath to catch falling paint. If you're removing paint by water blasting, try to collect all flakes of paint from the surrounding area.
- Clean the area around the groundsheet with a vacuum cleaner to collect any other paint debris. Dispose of the contents immediately. After sanding, wet wipe surfaces to remove dust and then use a commercial vacuum cleaner fitted with a high efficiency dust filter.
- Wrap up all paint debris securely and, for small amounts, put out with the household refuse collection or take to the rubbish tip. If in doubt, check with your local city or district council.
- Do not burn paint debris.
- Keep children and pets away from the work area and make sure they don't eat or play with paint debris.

Lead-Based Paint