

## FACT SHEET

### LEAD IN HOUSE PAINT

Before 1970, paints containing high levels of lead were used in many Australian houses. Exposure to lead is a health hazard. If you encounter old paint and you suspect that it may contain lead, you can buy a lead test kit from major paint manufacturers' trade shops or paint distributors.

Excellent advice is available from the Australian Government at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/atmosphere/airquality/publications/housepaint.html>.

A free booklet 'Lead Alert – The Six Step Guide to Painting Your Home' can also be downloaded from the website above.

The guide provides advice on:

- how to test for lead-based paint;
- detailed instructions for covering the paint, or removing it by wet scraping, wet sanding, chemical stripping, or heat processes;
- the right tools and equipment;
- looking after yourself – using protective clothing (coveralls, booties, hat, gloves) and a respirator (meeting the requirements of Australian Standard 1716) when the work might involve lead-bearing dust or fumes;
- how to clean up thoroughly;
- how to contain all waste;

- disposing of waste.

The guide also warns about the things not to do, for example:

- don't dry sand or dry scrape or use an ordinary power sander;
- don't sandblast;
- don't work outside on a wet or windy day;
- don't use an open flame torch or high temperature heat gun;
- don't eat, smoke or drink in the work area or with contaminated hands;
- don't allow children, pregnant or nursing women in a house or area where lead-based paint is being disturbed.

If your renovation or maintenance job is big or complicated, or you cannot obtain the right equipment to undertake the work safely, call in professional help, such as from a Master Painter.

Even if you are calling in a professional, it is worth reading the guide to ensure that the tradesperson takes all the necessary precautions.

For more information, contact:

Community Information Unit  
Tel: 1800 803 772.