SUBJECT: Lead Ban Enforcement

SOURCE: Peter Lassovszky

Is it appropriate for state and/or local governments to use commercially available lead-in-solder spot-testing kits for lead ban enforcement purposes?

Response:

Yes.   Commercial lead-in-solder testing kits will indicate the presence or absence of lead within solder.   (If knowledge of the exact concentration is needed, more extensive laboratory testing is necessary).   Lead solders contain approximately 30 percent to 50 percent lead -- usually 50 percent lead.   The test-kits are sensitive to lead concentrations within the above range, and thus will detect the use of lead/tin solder and other lead solders.

Spot-testing kits will not produce a positive result at solder lead concentrations of less than 0.2 percent (the lead ban "lead free" level).   Such kits, however, should not be used as production quality control mechanisms for ensuring that any particular "lead free" solder actually contains less than 0.2 percent lead.   More sophisticated laboratory techniques are needed for quality control purposes.