

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency

Communications Education  
And Public Affairs  
(1703)



## Note to Correspondents

FOR RELEASE: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 1994

To reduce Americans' exposure to lead during home renovations, EPA has proposed regulations that would require home renovators to provide an EPA pamphlet on the dangers of lead-based paint to owners and occupants of most pre-1978 housing before beginning renovations. The proposal would cover all housing built before 1978 with the exception of dwellings with no bedrooms (such as studios and efficiencies), housing reserved for the elderly and housing for handicapped persons above the age of six. Human exposure to lead may cause learning disabilities in children and hypertension and miscarriages in adults.

The regulations have been proposed under section 406 b of the TSCA.

Activities like scraping, sanding, or using a heat gun on surfaces that contain lead-based paint can release large amounts of lead dust and fumes, creating a health hazard for housing occupants. Lead dust from renovations can remain in the home long after the work is completed.

There will be a 60-day comment period on the proposed rule and pamphlet. Submit three copies of all written copies to TSCA Document Receipts (7407), Room G-009, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20460. Comments on the proposed rule should be identified by docket number OPPTS-62131. Comments on the proposed pamphlet should be provided separately and should be identified by docket number OPPTS-62133. To receive a copy of the proposed rule or draft pamphlet, contact the National Lead Information Clearinghouse at 800-242-LEAD. A fact sheet is attached. For more information contact Gwendolyn Brown at 202-260-1384.



# Environmental Fact Sheet

## EPA Proposes To Require Distribution of Pamphlet on Lead Before Renovations

### BACKGROUND:

In 1992, in an effort to protect families from exposure to the hazards of lead-based paint, Congress amended the *Toxic Substances Control Act* (TSCA) to add Title IV, entitled *Lead Exposure Reduction*. Title IV of TSCA directs EPA to address the general public's risk of exposure to lead-based paint hazards through regulations, education, and other activities. One particular concern of Congress and EPA is the potential lead exposure risks that can occur during renovations of housing containing lead-based paint unless certain safety measures are taken.

Exposure to lead can produce cause health problems ranging from delays in neurological and physical development, to nervous and reproductive system disorders. Acute exposures to lead can cause blindness, coma, and even death. Children under 6 years of age are especially at risk from exposure to lead. In 1991, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services characterized lead poisoning as "the number one environmental health threat to the health of children in the United States."

Recognizing that many families might be unaware that their homes might contain lead-based paint, section 406(a) of TSCA directs EPA to publish, after notice and comment, a lead hazard information pamphlet providing comprehensive information to the general public on lead-based paint in housing, the risks of exposure, and the precautions for avoiding exposure. Section 406(b) of the law directs EPA to issue regulations requiring that renovators distribute the pamphlet to owners and occupants of most pre-1978 residential housing before beginning renovations (1978 is the year that lead-based paint was banned from residential use).

### ACTION:

EPA has proposed regulations that would require renovators to provide an EPA pamphlet, entitled *Lead-Based Paint: Protect Your Family*, to owners and occupants of most pre-1978 housing before beginning renovations. The housing covered would include all housing built before 1978 with the exception of 0-bedroom dwellings, housing reserved for the elderly, and housing for handicapped persons above the age of 6. EPA's proposal would provide flexibility for renovations conducted in common areas (like stairways, lobbies, and hallways) of buildings containing several housing units.

In a separate notice, EPA has announced the availability of its draft lead hazard information pamphlet for public review. The notice also includes a discussion of the statutory content requirements for the pamphlet and areas where the Agency has requested public comment.

**MESSAGE:**

People have sometimes created a health hazard for their families without realizing it by disturbing surfaces containing lead-based paint during housing renovations. Activities like scraping, sanding, or using a heat gun on surfaces that contain lead-based paint can release large amounts of lead dust and fumes. Lead dust from renovations can remain in the home long after the work is completed.

EPA is proposing this rule to ensure that families are fully aware of the importance of preventative measures to protect housing occupants before beginning renovations in housing that may contain lead-based paint.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

For general information on lead and lead-based paint hazards, the general public can call EPA's Lead Hotline, toll-free, at (800) LEAD-FYI. To receive a copy of the proposed rule or draft pamphlet, please contact the National Lead Information Clearing House, toll-free, at 800-424-LEAD.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

EPA has established a 60-day period for the public to provide comments on the proposed rule and/or pamphlet. Submit three copies of all written copies to TSCA Document Receipts (7407), Rm. G-099, Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics, Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M St., SW., Washington, DC 20460. Comments on the proposed rule should be identified by the docket number **OPPTS-62131**. Comments on the proposed pamphlet should be provided separately, and should be identified by the docket number **OPPTS-62133**.