Glossary of Lead Paint Terms

Common Lead-Based Paint Terms

Lead-Based Paint: Any paint, varnish, shellac or other coating that contains lead equal to or greater than 1.0 mg/cm² as measured by XRF or laboratory analysis, or 0.5 percent by dry weight (5,000 mg/g, 5,000 ppm, or 5,000 mg/kg) as measured by laboratory analysis.

Lead-Based Paint Hazards: Housing conditions that cause human exposure to unsafe levels of lead from paint. These conditions include deteriorated lead-based paint; friction, impact or chewable painted surfaces; lead-contaminated dust; or lead-contaminated soil.

Physical Terms

Building Component: Any element of a building that may be painted or have dust on its surface, e.g. walls, stair treads, floors, railings, doors, windowsills.

Building Component Replacement: See Replacement.

Deteriorated Lead-Based Paint: Any lead-based paint coating on a damaged or deteriorated surface or fixture, or any interior or exterior lead-based paint that is peeling, chipping, blistering, flaking, worn, chalking, alligatoring, cracking or otherwise becoming separated from the substrate.

Lead Hazard Evaluation

Clearance Examination: Clearance is performed after hazard reduction, rehabilitation or maintenance activities to determine if a unit is safe for occupancy. It involves a visual assessment, analysis of dust and/or soil samples, and preparation of report. A certified risk assessor, paint inspector, or clearance technician (independent from entity/individual conducting paint stabilization or hazard reduction) conducts clearance.

Paint Testing: Testing of specific surfaces, by XRF (x-ray fluorescence) or lab analysis, to determine the lead content of these surfaces, performed by a certified lead-based paint inspector or certified risk assessor.

Risk Assessment: A comprehensive evaluation for lead-based paint hazards that includes paint testing, dust and soil sampling, and a visual evaluation. The assessment report identifies lead hazards and appropriate lead hazard reduction methods. A certified risk assessor must conduct the assessment.

Visual Assessment: A visual evaluation of interior and exterior painted surfaces to identify specific conditions that contribute to lead-based paint hazards. A certified risk assessor or Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspector trained in visual assessment performs the assessment.

Lead Hazard Reduction

Abatement: A measure or set of measures designed to permanently (i.e. 20 or more years) eliminate lead-based paint hazards or lead-based paint. Abatement strategies include the removal of lead-based paint, enclosure, encapsulation, replacement of building components coated with lead-based paint, removal of lead-contaminated dust, and removal of lead-contaminated soil or overlaying of soil with a durable covering such as asphalt (grass and sod are considered interim control measures). All these strategies require preparation; cleanup; waste disposal; post abatement clearance testing; record keeping; and, if applicable, monitoring. See also Complete abatement and Interim controls.

Complete Abatement: Abatement of all lead-based paint inside and outside a dwelling or building and reduction of any lead-contaminated dust or soil hazards. All these strategies require preparation; cleanup; waste disposal; post-abatement clearance testing; recordkeeping; and, if applicable, reevaluation and on-going monitoring. See also Abatement.

Cleaning: The process of using a HEPA vacuum and wet cleaning agents to remove leaded dust; the process includes removal of bulk debris from the work area. OSHA prohibits the use of compressed air to clean lead-contaminated dust from a surface.

Encapsulation: Any covering or coating that acts as a barrier between lead-based paint and the environment, the durability of which relies on adhesion and the integrity of the existing bonds between multiple layers of paint and between the substrates. See also Enclosure.

Enclosure: The use of rigid, durable construction materials that are mechanically fastened to the substrate to act as a barrier between the lead-based paint and the environment.

Lead-based Paint Hazard Control: Activities to control and eliminate lead-based paint hazards, including interim controls, abatement, and complete abatement.

Maintenance: Work intended to maintain adequate living conditions in a dwelling, which has the potential to disturb lead-based paint or paint that is suspected of being lead-based.

Monitoring: Surveillance to determine (1) that known or suspected lead-based paint is not deteriorating, (2) that lead-based paint hazard controls, such as paint stabilization, enclosure, or encapsulation have not failed, (3) that structural problems do not threaten the integrity of hazard controls or of known or suspected.

Paint Film Stabilization: An interim control method that stabilizes painted surfaces and addressed the underlying cause of deterioration. Steps include repairing defective surfaces, wet scraping, priming, and repainting surfaces coated with deteriorated lead-based paint; paint film stabilization includes cleanup and clearance.

Paint Removal: An abatement strategy that entails the removal of lead-based paint from surfaces. For lead hazard control work, this can mean using chemicals, heat guns below 1,000^{o} F, and certain abrasive methods. Open flame burning, open abrasive blasting, sandblasting, water blasting, and extensive dry scraping are prohibited paint removal methods. (Methylene chloride paint removers and dry scraping are also not recommended.)

Reevaluation: In lead hazard control work, the combination of a visual assessment and collection of environmental samples performed by a certified risk assessor to determine if a previously implemented lead-based paint hazard control measure is still effective and if the dwelling remains lead-safe. Also known as re-inspection.

Replacement: Replacement of existing features can be an appropriate abatement technique if the feature is deteriorated beyond repair or if the feature is of minor significance.

Treatment: In residential lead-based paint hazard control work, any method designed to control lead-based paint hazards. Treatment includes interim controls, abatement, and removal. Hazardous waste "treatment" is a method, technique, or process (such as neutralization) that is designed to change the physical, chemical, or biological character or composition of hazardous waste to neutralize it; render it non-hazardous or less hazardous; recover it; make it safer to transport, store, or dispose; or allow for easier recovery, storage, or volume reduction.

Lead Poisoning

Environmental Intervention Blood Lead Level: The level of lead in blood that requires intervention in a child under age six. This is defined as a blood lead level of 20 µg/dL (micrograms per deciliter) of whole blood or above for a single test, or blood lead levels of 15-19 µg/dL in two tests taken at least three months apart.

Key Units of Measurement

µg (Microgram): A microgram is 1/1000th of a milligram (or one millionth of a gram). To put this unit into perspective, a penny weighs 2 grams. To get a microgram, you would need to divide the penny into 2 million pieces. A microgram is one of those two million pieces.

ft^2 (Square foot): One square foot is equal to an area that has a length of one foot (12 inches) and a width of one foot (12 inches).

µg/dL: Micrograms per deciliter used to measure the level of lead in children's blood to establish whether the intervention is needed. A deciliter (1/10th of liter) is a little less than half a cup. As noted above, a microgram is the same weight as one penny divided into two million parts.

mg/cm^2: Milligrams per square centimeter, used for paint by XRF machines.

Percent: percent by weight, used usually for lead-based paint (1 percent = 10,000 µg/gram.

ppm: parts per million by weight, equivalent to µg/gram (10,000 ppm = 1 percent). Used to measure lead in paint and soil.

Standards

Definition of Lead-Based Paint:
Paint that contains at least:

- 1 milligram per centimeters square (mg/cm²) of lead.
- 0.5 percent lead; or 5,000 parts per million (ppm) lead by dry weight.