

Get Smart About Lead Paint

Best Practices for Landlords and Property Owners

Lead Tipsheet #7



Did you know that half of all children poisoned by lead in Maine live in rental housing?

In Portland, Bangor, Saco, Biddeford, Lewiston, Auburn and Sanford almost all children poisoned by lead live in rental housing. By far, dust from lead paint is the most common cause of lead poisoning in children. Lead paint is found in most houses and apartment buildings built before 1950 and in some built before 1978.

If you own or manage rental units built before 1978, use this tipsheet to get smart about lead paint. Protect your tenants and your investment.

What happens if a child who lives in rental housing is poisoned by lead?

Children are regularly checked for lead at doctor visits. When a child in rental housing has high levels of lead, the law requires certified inspectors to examine all units in the property. If inspectors find lead hazards:

- The inspectors report it to the state government and post a notice on the building.
- The owner cannot evict the tenants or rent the unit to anyone else.
- Lead abatement is required. This costs about \$10,000 for each unit.
- The owner must relocate the family during the abatement, at the owner's expense.

But if inspectors find a well-maintained unit with no lead hazards, such as chipping, peeling, flaking or chalking paint, **owners can avoid abatement and its consequences.**

Best Practices for Landlords and Property Owners

These best practices will help keep your tenants safe from lead poisoning. And they may protect you from legal problems if a child with lead poisoning lives in one of your rental units.

1. Assume your property has lead paint if it was built before 1950. Test for lead if you are unsure.
2. Maintain painted surfaces properly. Look for chipping, peeling, flaking or chalking paint every 6 months and at unit turnover.
3. In your lease, require that tenants tell you about peeling, chipping, flaking or chalking paint. Address these problems when notified.
4. If you need to renovate, repair or paint in your rental property, hire an RRP certified contractor or get certified yourself.
5. Keep a record of anything you do to address lead paint in your rental property.

Go to www.maine.gov/healthyhomes for information on testing, maintenance, looking for lead and RRP certified contractors.

Protect your tenants. Protect your investment.

- Check this website: maine.gov/healthyhomes
- Call for advice: **866-292-3474** • TTY: **Call Maine Relay 711**



Maine Center for
Disease Control and Prevention
An Office of the
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