

Lead-Safe Work Practices



All lead hazard reduction and lead hazard control activities must be performed per the Rhode Island Department of Health Rules and Regulations for Lead Poisoning Prevention [216-RICR-50-15-12] and follow lead-safe work practices. This includes lead-based paint removal in homes built before 1978 or any home, child care, or nursery school where there are children – or when hiring a professional to work on housing when lead-based paint is disturbed for any reason.

Before You Disturb Lead-Based Paint

- Anyone disturbing more than 6 square feet of paint per interior room or common area or more than 20 square feet of exterior paint must be licensed by RIDOH.
- Property owners must make all reasonable efforts to ensure that occupants are not present during the work.
- Before starting any work, all furniture and other movable objects must be removed from the area or completely covered with plastic sheeting or other impenetrable material.
- The floor and all openings between the work area and any uncontaminated areas must be covered with plastic sheeting and sealed with duct tape. The area must be wet cleaned of all dust and debris after the work is complete.
- A licensed Lead Inspector must conduct a clearance inspection to determine that lead hazards have been corrected and permissible lead dust levels have been achieved.





Approved Paint Removal Methods

- Wet scraping or sanding paint by hand;
- Using heated devices that do not cause paint to burn or exceed 1100F°;
- Removing paint using chemicals that do not burn and that do not contain methylene chloride;
- Using mechanical equipment that is controlled by a HEPA vacuum system so that the system immediately collects all paint, dust, and/or other debris;
- Using mechanical equipment where the sanding or scraping disk is narrower than the surface where it is being used;
- Using dry blasting equipment controlled by a HEPA vacuum system on the exterior of a building so that the system immediately collects all paint, dust, and/or other debris;
- Other methods of removing paint on the exterior of a building are approved in writing by the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Office of Air Resources.

Prohibited Paint Removal Methods

- Scraping dry paint by hand, except for within one foot of electrical outlets;
- Sanding dry paint by hand;
- Using a heated device, which causes paint to burn or that heats a surface to temperatures at or above 1100F°;
- Burning paint with a torch or flame;
- Using chemicals to remove paint that can burn or that contains methylene chloride;
- Using mechanical equipment for sanding or scraping where the disk is wider than the surface where it is being used;
- Using dry blasting equipment on interior surfaces;
- Using wet blasting equipment and pressure or power washing where water is not contained;
- Any method to remove paint on the exterior of a building not approved by DEM Office of Air Resources;
- Any method that violates state or local building codes.

Clean Up At the End of the Work Day When Disturbing Lead-Based Paint

At the end of each work day, collect all visible debris. Spray all ground cover and other sheeting used for containment with a fine mist of water and collect the residue. Place collected paint chips, debris, and residue in single 6 mil or double 4 mil plastic bags (or other appropriate containers). Store waste and all ground sheets where they are inaccessible to the public.

At the end of the paint removal project, place all paint chips, debris, and plastic sheets used for containment in single 6 mil or double 4 mil plastic bags. Securely seal and store all bags or containers and dispose of them properly (homeowners may dispose of waste from paint removal work as part of their regular trash pick-up).

Learn about safe work practices at health.ri.gov/environmental-lead

Call 401-222-5960 with questions.