

## **ARTICLE (LONG VERSION)**

### *Headline:*

If You're Not Lead-Safe Certified, Lead Paint Could Cost You Big Time.

### *Body Copy:*

Think lead paint doesn't affect your business? Think again.

An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule to protect children from lead exposure mandates that all renovation and repair contractors working in pre-1978 homes, schools, and day care centers who disrupt more than six square feet of lead paint are required to become EPA Certified in lead-safe work practices. Renovation contractors are required to take a one-day training course and firms must send a short application to the EPA. If not, they could face thousands of dollars in fines, and – even worst – be responsible for harming their customers.

Jim Jones, Assistant Administrator of the EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, said there is a simple reason for the rule: protecting people's health, especially children.

"Childhood lead poisoning still occurs and is a preventable disease, and our goal is to eliminate it," said Jones.

Many renovation contractors think the issue of lead poisoning went away years ago, or that they are doing all that needs to be done to avoid it. But lead paint poisoning isn't just about the familiar vision of children eating paint chips, and even contractors who think they are doing a good job may not be working in a lead-safe manner. In fact, research shows that renovation contractors like carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painters and window replacement experts can inadvertently expose children to harmful levels of lead from invisible dust disturbed during jobs they perform every day.

"The greatest risk is for young children living in homes during renovations," said Jones. "One study found that they were 30% more likely to have unsafe levels of lead in their blood than kids in homes where renovations were not occurring. So it's very important that renovation contractors learn how to work lead-safe and that families hire Lead-Safe Certified contractors."

A pregnant woman exposed to lead can transfer lead to her fetus. The irreversible damages of lead poisoning can lead to a range of effects from memory loss and diminished motor skills to behavioral and learning disabilities.

Renovation contractors that work on pre-1978 homes, apartments, schools, day care centers and other places where children spend time, from large and small contractors to building services professionals, have to take the required steps to become lead-safe certified. Renovation contracting firms must register with the EPA and pay a fee to become an EPA Lead-Safe Certified firm. In addition, individual renovation contractors who will be doing the work or repairs must take a one-day training course from an EPA-accredited training provider to become a Certified Renovator. Certified Renovation Contractors are then responsible for providing on-the-job training in lead-safe work practices to their staffs. Certified renovation contractor training is also available via e-learning. This option allows renovation contractors to take most of the course online, making it more convenient. EPA certification for both firms and individuals is good for five years. Re-certification will be required beginning in 2015 for many renovation firms and individual renovation contractors.

“Getting lead-safe certified is the right thing to do for renovation contractors, their customers, and their employees, and especially for children who spend time in or near spaces that are being renovated,” said Jones.

The rule is designed to provide significant benefits, in particular to children’s health and learning potential, yet the EPA is mindful of the relatively small added costs that may result from complying with this important rule. The EPA maintains its consumer campaign designed to raise awareness of the dangers of lead paint poisoning, and to encourage consumers to choose to hire only renovation contractors who are trained and possess the Lead-Safe Certified logo, which contains a firm-specific number.

***For additional information including how your firm can get Lead-Safe Certified and where to find an EPA-accredited trainer in your area, visit [epa.gov/getleadsafe](http://epa.gov/getleadsafe) or call 800-424-LEAD today.***

###