



Update Your Home Safely with a Certified Remodeler

So you've made the decision to finally remodel the outdated kitchen and living room of your home. But if you live in a house built before 1978, a federal law regulating the removal of lead paint may affect your home remodeling project.

In 1978, the use of lead paint was officially banned from residential construction. Before that, however, lead paint was used in more than 38 million homes, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Since April 2010, contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 must be certified and follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination.

The Dangers of Lead Paint

During a renovation or remodel, dust from lead paint removal can fill the air and be breathed in or small children could ingest lead paint chips that fall from the wall. For young children, lead poisoning can cause learning disabilities, hearing loss and behavior problems. In adults, lead poisoning can lead to hypertension and high blood pressure. Pregnant women run the risk of passing the poison on to their unborn child.

It is important that you find a remodeler who is trained in lead-safe work practices rather than try to do the work yourself. To ensure the safety of the home's occupants, the EPA's regulation requires that any major renovation to homes built before 1978 must be performed by a certified remodeler or renovator.

What are Lead-Safe Work Practices?

Your contractor should follow specific work practices, including [these three simple procedures](#):

1. Contain the work area so that dust and debris do not escape. Warning signs should be put up and heavy-duty plastic and tape should be used to seal off doors and heating and cooling system vents and to cover the floors and any furniture that cannot be moved.
2. Minimize dust. There is no way to eliminate dust, but some paint removal methods create less dust than others. For example, using water to mist areas before sanding or scraping; scoring paint before separating components; and prying and pulling apart components instead of breaking them. Methods that generate large amounts of dust and should not be used include open flame burning or torching; sanding, grinding, planing, needle gunning, or blasting with power tools and equipment not equipped with a shroud and high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter vacuum attachment; or using a heat gun at temperatures greater than 1100°F.
3. Clean up thoroughly. When all the work is done, and before taking down any plastic that isolates the work area from the rest of the home, the area should be cleaned up using special cleaning methods. These include using a HEPA vacuum to clean up dust and debris on all surfaces, followed by wet mopping with plenty of water.

To find a lead-safe certified contractor or company near you, contact **the HBA of the Valley** or visit www.MyHBAworks.org.