

Tips for Checking a Contractor's Background & Experience

- Always ask to see a contractor's lead-based paint license or certificate.
- If they are not certified, ask to see a contractor's training certificate. EPA has developed training courses for lead-based paint professionals. Ask if the training received by a contractor was based on EPA course materials.
- Check the references of the last three lead inspections or risk assessments performed by the contractor.
- Ask what kinds of information will be included in the final inspection or risk assessment report that will be prepared for you. An **inspection** report should identify the lead content of the painted surfaces in your home. A **risk assessment** will provide you with information about the lead content of deteriorated painted surfaces, and also should tell you whether lead is present in dust and soil around your home. It should also present options for reducing the hazard.

To obtain information on how a lead inspection or risk assessment is conducted or a list of states with lead certification or licensing programs, contact:
the National Lead Information Center
at **1-800-424-LEAD**

For the **hearing impaired, call, TDD 1-800-526-5456**. (FAX: **202-659-1192**, Internet: **EHC@NSC.ORG**).

You may also contact the EPA regional office closest to your area for additional information on state contractor certification & licensing programs:

Region 1
Boston, MA
(617) 565-3420

Region 2
Edison, NJ
(908) 321-6671

Region 3
Philadelphia, PA
(215) 566-2084

Region 4
Atlanta, GA
(404)562-8998

Region 5
Chicago, IL
(312) 886-7836

Region 6
Dallas, TX
(214) 665-7577

Region 7
Kansas City, KS
(913)551-7518

Region 8
Denver, CO
(303)312-6021

Region 9
San Francisco, CA
(415) 744-1117

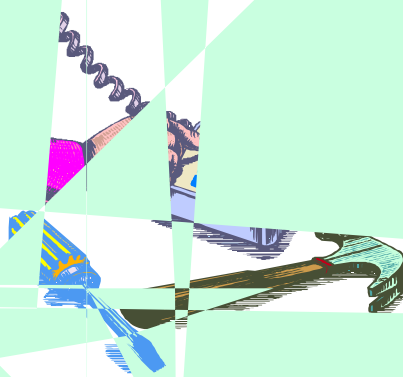
Region 10
Seattle, WA
(206) 553-1985

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

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Prevention, Pesticides
and Toxic Substances
(7404)

Finding a Qualified Lead Professional for Your Home



Hiring a Lead Professional

The purpose of this pamphlet is to help you find a lead professional who can test your home for lead-based paint and tell you whether the paint poses a hazard to you or your family. It also will provide you with some background on the qualifications to look for in a lead professional.

Over 80% of all housing in the U.S. built before 1978 contains some lead-based paint on the interior or exterior. If managed properly, lead-based paint that is in good condition is usually not a hazard. If allowed to deteriorate, however, lead from the paint or lead dust can create serious health hazards. Similarly, without proper precautions, renovations of surfaces with lead-based paint release lead dust.

If you are buying a home or renting an apartment built before 1978 you should receive a pamphlet containing general information on lead-based paint hazards. This information is being made available under a new federal program that started in 1996. The goals of this program are to help you reduce the hazards of lead-based paint in your home and to prevent small children from being poisoned by lead from paint.

If you want to find out if your house contains lead-based paint or a lead hazard, you may want to hire someone to inspect your home for lead paint and to evaluate the paint for any hazards.

Q. What will I learn if I hire a lead professional?

A. A certified lead professional offers two services: 1) an **inspection**, or 2) a **risk assessment**. Some lead professionals may be certified or licensed to conduct both. A paint inspection will tell you the lead content of every painted surface in your home. However, an inspection won't tell you whether the paint poses a hazard or how you should deal with it.

A risk assessment tells you if there are any sources of serious lead exposure (such as peeling paint and lead dust). It also tells you what options are available for addressing these hazards.

Q. Are lead professionals required to be certified or licensed?

A. Several states have developed certification or licensing programs for individuals who identify and assess lead-based paint for hazards. Information on obtaining a list of state-certified lead-based paint inspectors, risk assessors, and contractors is provided on the back of this brochure.

EPA also is working with these and other states to establish a national training and certification program for lead-based paint professionals. Under this program, all lead-based paint inspectors, risk assessors and contractors must be trained and certified starting in 1999.

Q. What if my state doesn't have a certification or licensing program?

A. If your state doesn't have a certification or licensing program yet, and you need to locate a lead professional, here are some suggestions:

- Hire a contractor who has been certified or licensed in a state that does have a program.
- If you can't find a contractor who's been certified or licensed by another state, hire a contractor who has been trained to conduct lead-based paint inspections or risk assessments. Look for workers whose training was based on course work developed by EPA or approved by your state.
- Keep in mind that in addition to states, some cities and counties may require you to use certified or licensed contractors to conduct lead work. If you are required to use a certified or licensed

professional and your state doesn't have a program, you will need to work with county or local officials to locate a professional who meets their requirements.

Q. Is there a difference between a certified or licensed contractor and a contractor who is only trained?

A. Yes, there is a difference. To obtain a certification or license, most states require applicants to meet three standards. One standard requires an applicant to possess certain experience and/or skills. Second, an applicant is required to be trained to conduct specific lead-related tasks. The training an applicant receives typically must be approved by the state or an organization recognized by the state. The third and final means to ensure the competency of an applicant is a certification exam.

Individuals who have been trained, but who are uncertified might not possess work experience relevant to conducting lead-based paint activities. Nor have they passed an examination to test their proficiency. For that reason, it is especially important to check the references and credentials of uncertified contractors.

Q. What if the lead paint in my home poses a hazard?

A. You may have a range of options for addressing lead hazards in your home. A risk assessment report should contain recommendations on how to control lead-based paint hazards safely. If you have been advised to remove or control lead paint, use the same advice provided in this pamphlet when looking for a lead abatement contractor.