



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

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State Health Department Cautions Residents About the Dangers of Lead-Based Paint

BISMARCK, N.D. – In conjunction with *Home Indoor Air Quality Month*, the North Dakota Department of Health is cautioning residents about the dangers of lead-based paint.

Governor John Hoeven has proclaimed October 2010 as Home Indoor Air Quality Month to encourage North Dakotans to learn more about indoor air quality issues.

Lead is a highly toxic metal that was used for many years in products found in and around homes, such as paint and wood stains. Lead can cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities, to seizures and death. Children age 6 and younger are at the most risk for health effects from lead. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that more than 300,000 children younger than 5 in the United States have blood lead levels greater than the maximum recommended level.

Although residential use of lead-based paint was banned in 1978, it is still the most common source of lead in the home. Lead-based paint is found in many places in and around older homes; for example, interior and exterior walls, ceilings, stairways, door and window trim and baseboards.

According to the Department of Health, all lead-based paint surfaces should be inspected regularly to look for signs of wear or disintegration. Any lead-based painted surface that shows signs of deterioration can easily release lead into the environment. In particular, watch for hazardous conditions such as chipping, flaking and water damage. Any damaged lead-based paint should be repaired immediately. Paint chips containing lead are a hazard if eaten.

Lead-based paint also contributes to another serious hazard – lead dust. Lead dust is easily inhaled or swallowed and can be scattered both inside and outside a house, where it can get on toys, floors, play areas, soils and food.

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“Any home remodeling project that disturbs lead-based paint in a home built before 1978 should be carried out properly to avoid exposing occupants to lead,” said Sandi Washek with the North Dakota Department of Health’s lead program. “Children and pregnant women should never be around renovation or remodeling projects that create lead dust.”

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed a new regulation for managing the risks of lead during renovation projects. On April 22, 2010, the federal renovation, remodeling and painting (RRP) rule went into effect requiring that anyone paid to repair, remodel or paint in homes, child-care facilities and schools built before 1978 must be certified by the EPA and follow lead-safe work practice standards to prevent lead contamination

Common renovation activities like sanding, painting, cutting, replacing windows and demolition can create hazardous lead dust and chips that can be harmful to children and adults. Consumers should be aware of the new RRP rule and make sure that any contractor they hire is EPA-RRP certified. Owners conducting repairs in their own homes are not covered by this rule (unless they receive compensation, such as landlords).

To learn more about the new lead-based paint RRP regulations for home renovation and remodeling when there is a risk of lead hazards, contact Sandi Washek, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.5188.

Information also is available on the EPA website at www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm or the North Dakota Department of Health’s website at www.ndhealth.gov/AQ/IAQ/LBP/.

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