



Post-Disaster Renovations and Lead-Based Paint

Natural disasters, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes or floods, often result in the need for renovations to damaged homes and other structures. When common renovation activities like sanding, cutting, and demolition occur in structures that contain lead-based paint, such activities create lead-based paint hazards, including lead-contaminated dust. Lead-based paint hazards are harmful to both adults and children, but particularly pregnant women and children under age six.

To protect against health risks, EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule is designed to minimize exposure to lead-based paint hazards. Under this Rule, contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb painted surfaces in homes and child-occupied facilities (including day care centers and schools), built before 1978, must, among other things, be certified and follow lead-safe work practices. For complete information about the RRP Rule and its requirements, go to: www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/renovation.htm#requirements.

To ensure that property owners and occupants are able to act quickly to preserve their homes and property in the wake of disasters, the RRP Rule includes an emergency provision exempting firms from certain requirements. See 40 CFR 745.82(b). Emergency renovations are defined as renovation activities that were not planned but result from a sudden, unexpected event that, if not immediately attended to, present a safety or public health hazard, or threaten equipment and/or property with significant damage. See the RRP Frequent Questions (FQ), #23002-32367, available at: <http://toxics.supportportal.com/ics/support/splash.asp?deptID=23019>.

Under the emergency provision of the RRP Rule, contractors performing activities that are immediately necessary to protect personal property and public health need not be RRP trained or certified and are exempt from the following RRP Rule requirements: information distribution, posting warning signs at the renovation site, containment of dust, and waste handling. Firms are NOT exempt from the RRP Rule's requirements related to cleaning, cleaning verification, and recordkeeping. Further, the exemption applies only to the extent necessary to respond to the emergency. Once the portion of the renovation that addresses the source of the emergency is completed, the remaining activities are subject to all requirements of the RRP Rule.

My home has been severely damaged and will require extensive renovations. Does the RRP Rule apply?

The RRP Rule does not apply to an activity that demolishes and rebuilds a structure to a point where it is effectively new construction. Thus, in pre-1978 homes and child-occupied facilities where all interior and exterior painted surfaces (including windows) are removed and replaced, the provisions of the RRP Rule would not apply. Activities involving the removal and replacement of only some interior and exterior painted surfaces would still be covered under the RRP Rule. For more information, see the Frequent Questions (FQs 23002-18426 and 23002-23415) on our website at: <http://epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrp-faq.pdf>.

What is EPA's Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule?

Contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb more than six square feet of painted surfaces in homes and child occupied facilities (including day care centers and schools) built before 1978 must, among other things, be certified and follow lead-safe work practices. Federal law requires that individuals receive certain information, such as EPA's Renovate Right brochure, before starting work.

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Important Notice To Homeowners

If you hire a contractor to perform renovation work on your pre-1978 home, you should be aware that, generally, your hired professional must be RRP-certified and observe the requirements of the RRP Rule. However, if the circumstances necessitate an emergency renovation as defined above, the professional need not comply with certain requirements of the RRP Rule as described earlier — but only to the extent necessary to respond to the emergency. The RRP Rule does not impose requirements on a homeowner performing work on an owner-occupied residence. However, EPA encourages homeowners to hire certified professionals that have received required training on lead-safe work practices to prevent lead contamination. Homeowners that choose to perform renovation work themselves should take steps to contain the work area, minimize dust and clean up thoroughly. To learn how to perform renovation work safely, contact the National Lead Information Center, 1-800-424-LEAD (5323).

What steps should homeowners take to protect themselves and their families from exposure to lead dust if they plan on doing their own renovations?

- Contain the work area so that dust does not escape from the area. Cover floors and furniture that cannot be moved with heavy-duty plastic and tape, and seal off doors and heating and cooling system vents.
- Keep children, pregnant women, and pets out of the work area at all times.
- Minimize dust during the project by using techniques that generate less dust, such as wet sanding or scraping, or using sanders or grinders that have HEPA vacuum attachments which capture the dust that is generated.
- Clean up thoroughly by using a HEPA vacuum and wet wiping to clean up dust and debris on surfaces. Mop floors with plenty of rinse water before removing plastic from doors, windows, and vents.

State and local information on lead paint:

- NJ: <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/rrtp/lbpaint.htm>
http://www.state.nj.us/health/iep/lead_faq.shtml#What_to_Do_if_You_Have_Lead
- NY: http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/lead/renovation_repair_painting/
<http://www.health.ny.gov/publications/2502/index.htm>
- NYC: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/ehs/cleaning-safety.pdf>