

Lead Hazards in Substitute Care Settings: Questions and Answers

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Department of Health are providing this document to help child care centers, family child care homes, foster homes, and children's residential facilities better understand lead hazards and their options if they suspect or identify the presence of lead in their home or facility. Recently, your home or facility was identified as having a lead hazard and/or chipping or peeling paint, which may contain lead if the structure was built prior to 1978. The information below may answer your questions. If you need additional guidance, please call the Ohio Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-877-LEADSAFE (532-3723).

1. Why is lead harmful to children?

Exposure to lead can seriously harm a child's health. It can damage a child's brain and nervous system, slow their growth and development, cause learning and behavior problems, and cause hearing and speech problems.

2. Where can lead be found?

- Homes built before 1978 (when residential lead-based paint was banned) likely contain lead-based paint. When paint peels and cracks, it can cause lead dust. Children can be poisoned when they swallow or breathe in lead dust.
- Certain water pipes may contain lead.
- Lead can be found in some products such as toys and jewelry.
- Lead is sometimes in candies or traditional remedies imported from other countries.
- Certain jobs and hobbies involve working with lead-based products, such as stained glass, and may cause parents or other adults to bring lead into the home or facility on their clothes and other personal belongings.

3. What are the requirements for lead renovation, repair, or painting for a structure built prior to 1978?

Child care homes and facilities licensed or certified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services are required to follow the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting rule. The rule requires that anyone conducting renovation, repair, and painting projects that disturb lead-based paint in a child care home or facility built before 1978 be EPA-certified and adhere to lead-safe work practices. Although the rule does not apply to work performed by the homeowner of a single-family residential structure used as a foster home, foster families still are encouraged to follow the guidelines. For more information, visit [epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program-operators-childcare-facilities](https://www.epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program-operators-childcare-facilities) or call the EPA's National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD (5323).

4. **Can I renovate, repair, or paint the property myself?**

Child care homes and facilities licensed or certified by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services are required to follow the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Lead Renovation, Repair, and Painting rule for any repairs, renovations, or painting. The rule requires that anyone conducting renovation, repair, and painting projects that disturb paint in target housing or child-occupied facilities built before 1978 be EPA-certified and adhere to lead-safe work practices. Although the rule does not apply to work performed by the homeowner of a single-family residential structure used as a foster home, foster families still are encouraged to follow the guidelines. For more information, visit epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program-operators-childcare-facilities.

5. **Should I have my property or building tested for lead?**

If you suspect the presence of lead in your home or facility, a lead risk assessment should be conducted by a licensed lead assessor. Only a lead risk assessor licensed by the Ohio Department of Health can be used for this service. The lead assessor will conduct an on-site investigation to determine and report the existence, nature, severity, and location of lead hazards. The following link provides a search feature to identify licensed lead risk assessors in Ohio: publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/Envlicense_Reports/External_License_Search.aspx?Program=Lead.

6. **What happens once the licensed lead assessor identifies lead?**

Any lead hazard identified by the licensed risk assessor must be repaired by a lead abatement contractor licensed by the Ohio Department of Health. Once lead hazard control work has been completed, a lead clearance inspection must be conducted to verify that lead hazards have been controlled. A lead risk assessor or lead inspector licensed by the Ohio Department of Health must be used for the clearance to be valid.

7. **Where can I find a licensed lead assessor and licensed lead abatement contractor?**

The following link provides a search feature to identify licensed lead professionals in Ohio: publicapps.odh.ohio.gov/Envlicense_Reports/External_License_Search.aspx?Program=Lead

8. **What are the best options after chipping or peeling paint is identified?**

- If the structure was built prior to 1978, please refer to questions 3 through 7.
- If the structure was built after 1978, it likely contains no lead, but a risk assessment could still be considered for properties built a few years after 1978. Please refer to questions 5 through 7 for more information.

9. **As a program serving children, should I inform families or the placing agencies when lead hazards are identified?**

Yes. In addition, parents, guardians, and legal custodians should be strongly encouraged to have their pediatrician or medical provider test their children's blood for lead. For more information, please visit odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/know-our-programs/childhood-lead-poisoning/for-parents/.

10. **What happens if a child is identified to have an elevated blood lead level?**

The Ohio Department of Health or a local health department can conduct a public health lead investigation risk assessment at the property. If the assessment identifies chipping/peeling paint and associated lead hazards, a lead hazard control order will be issued to the property owner and made available to the guardians or custodians of all children receiving care at the property.

11. **Does all chipping or peeling paint contain lead?**

No, it does not. However, if a building or home was built prior to 1978, it likely contains lead. Licensing specialists do not make determinations regarding the concentration of lead in paint. If they cite chipping or peeling paint as a possible health hazard, a licensed lead risk assessor should be used to determine whether the chipping or peeling paint also poses a lead hazard.

12. **Is there funding to assist with lead testing and lead hazard control?**

Funding is available to residential settings built before 1978. This includes family child care homes and residential foster care settings. For more information, call the Ohio Department of Health at 1-887-532-3723 or 614-644-0220.

13. **Who should I contact if I have questions about potential or known lead in my facility?**

Call the Ohio Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 1-877-LEADSAFE (532-3723).