

Flooding Cleanup: Lead & Asbestos

Clean-up that occurs after a flood can expose the homeowner to dangerous levels of asbestos and lead. One way to avoid this kind of hazardous exposure is to contact qualified contractors to remove the asbestos and lead from the home. For a list of contractors please contact the Ohio Department of Health at (614) 752-4157.

If homeowners plan to clean up their residences themselves, they should follow certain safety guidelines:

- ◆ **PROTECT** all foods, appliances, personal items, cooking utensils and clothing from dust. Remove them from the work area or place them securely in plastic bags.
- ◆ If possible, **REMOVE** and **REPLACE** lead-painted trim. If this is not possible, use a non-flammable chemical paint stripper (make sure it does not contain methylene chloride) to remove the paint. Follow product instructions.
- ◆ Work in only **ONE** room at a time and be sure to **SEAL** it off from the rest of the house.
- ◆ **WEAR** protective clothing, hair covering, shoes, goggles, gloves and an air-purifying respirator like an N95 mask (a paper mask is not sufficient) when removing lead-based paint. N95 masks are sometimes available at local hardware stores. **DO NOT** wear these clothes into clean areas of the house. At the end of the day, remove clothing in a designated change area and place in a closed container.
- ◆ **COVER** carpets with heavy plastic and seal the edges with tape.
- ◆ Place a **DAMP** floor mat outside the door to a work area to collect lead dust from the bottom of shoes.
- ◆ **USE AN EXHAUST** window fan with an improvised filter (e.g., a 3-inch piece of foam rubber) or a furnace filter to prevent dust from spreading outdoors.
- ◆ When removing exterior paint, **SEAL** windows and vents so that dust does not filter inside. Use a drop cloth or plastic sheeting sealed to the foundation with duct tape to prevent contamination of the soil around the house.
- ◆ (OVER)
- ◆ At the end of each work day, **COLLECT** all debris and large paint chips and thoroughly clean the work area. If available, use a HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air) vacuum cleaner (ordinary vacuums release dust into the air). Then **WASH** surfaces with a solution containing either Trisodium phosphate (TSP- available at hardware stores) or, a phosphate-free lead dissolving detergent (powdered dishwasher soap).
- ◆ **COLLECT** wash water with a wet vacuum.
- ◆ **WASH** all surfaces again 24 hours after de-leading is complete. Lead dust will continue to settle over a period of hours and days.
- ◆ **DO NOT** eat, drink or smoke in an area where lead-based paint is being removed; these activities can transfer dust from hands and clothing to the mouth and cause health problems.

NOTE: The removal of lead-based paint using heat guns or torches, sand or water blasting, and dry sanding are dangerous to your health, and may cause death.