

WORKING WITH REAL ESTATE AGENTS

When buying or selling real estate, you may find it helpful to have a real estate agent assist you. Real estate agents can provide many useful services and work with you in different ways. In some real estate transactions, the agents work for the seller. In others, the seller and buyer may each have agents. And sometimes the same agents work for both the buyer and the seller. It is important for you to know whether an agent is working for you as **your** agent or simply working **with** you while acting as an agent of the other party.

This brochure addresses the various types of working relationships that may be available to you. It should help you decide which relationship you want to have with a real estate agent. It will also give you useful information about the various services real estate agents can provide buyers and sellers, and it will help explain how real estate agents are paid.

SELLERS

Seller's Agent

If you are selling real estate, you may want to “list” your property for sale with a real estate firm. If so, you will sign a “listing agreement” authorizing the firm and its agents to represent you in your dealings with buyers as your *seller's agent*. You may also be asked to allow agents from other firms to help find a buyer for your property.

Be sure to read and understand the listing agreement before you sign it. Your agent must give you a copy of the listing agreement after you sign it.

Duties to Seller: The listing firm and its agents must • promote your best interests • be loyal to you • follow your lawful instructions • provide you with all material facts that could influence your decisions • use reasonable skill, care and diligence, and • account for all monies they handle for you. Once you have signed the listing agreement, the firm and its agents may not give any confidential information about you to prospective buyers or their agents without your permission so long as they represent you. But **until you sign the listing agreement, you should avoid telling the listing agent anything you would *not* want a buyer to know.**

Services and Compensation: To help you sell your property, the listing firm and its agents will offer to perform a number of services for you. These may include • helping you price your property • advertising and marketing your property • giving you all required property disclosure forms for you to complete • negotiating for you the best possible price and terms • reviewing all written offers with you and • otherwise promoting your interests.

For representing you and helping you sell your property, you will pay the listing firm a sales commission or fee. The listing agreement must state the amount or method for determining the commission or fee and whether you will allow the firm to share its commission with agents representing the buyer.

Dual Agent

You may even permit the listing firm and its agents to represent you **and** a buyer at the same time. This “dual agency relationship” is most likely to happen if an agent with your listing firm is working as a *buyer's agent* with someone who wants to purchase your property. If this occurs and you have not already agreed to a dual agency relationship in your listing agreement, your listing agent will ask you to amend your listing agreement to permit the agent to act as agent for both you and the buyer.

It may be difficult for a *dual agent* to advance the interests of both the buyer and seller. Nevertheless, a *dual agent* must treat buyers and sellers fairly and equally. Although the *dual agent* owes them the same duties, buyers and sellers can prohibit *dual agents* from divulging **certain** confidential information about them to the other party.

Some firms also offer a form of dual agency called “designated agency” where one agent in the firm represents the seller and another agent represents the buyer. This option (when available) may allow each “designated agent” to more fully represent each party.

If you choose the “dual agency” option, remember that since a dual agent’s loyalty is divided between parties with competing interests, it is especially important that you have a clear understanding of • what your relationship is with the *dual agent* and • what the agent will be doing for you in the transaction.

BUYERS

When buying real estate, you may have several choices as to how you want a real estate firm and its agents to work with you. For example, you may want them to represent only you (as a **buyer’s agent**). You may be willing for them to represent both you and the seller at the same time (as a **dual agent**). Or you may agree to let them represent only the seller (**seller’s agent** or **subagent**). Some agents will offer you a choice of these services. Others may not.

Buyer’s Agent

Duties to Buyer: If the real estate firm and its agents represent you, they must • promote your best interests • be loyal to you • follow your lawful instructions • provide you with all material facts that could influence your decisions • use reasonable skill, care and diligence, and • account for all monies they handle for you. Once you have agreed (either orally or in writing) for the firm and its agents to be your *buyer’s agent*, they may not give any confidential information about you to sellers or their agents without your permission so long as they represent you. But **until you make this agreement with your buyer’s agent, you should avoid telling the agent anything you would not want a seller to know.**

Unwritten Agreements: To make sure that you and the real estate firm have a clear understanding of what your relationship will be and what the firm will do for you, you may want to have a written agreement. However, some firms may be willing to represent and assist you for a time as a *buyer’s agent* without a written agreement. But if you decide to make an offer to purchase a particular property, the agent must obtain a written agency agreement before writing the offer. If you do not sign it, the agent can no longer represent and assist you and is no longer required to keep information about you confidential.

Be sure to read and understand any agency agreement before you sign it. Once you sign it, the agent must give you a copy of it.

Services and Compensation: Whether you have a written or unwritten agreement, a *buyer’s agent* will perform a number of services for you. These may include helping you • find a suitable property • arrange financing • learn more about the property and • other-wise promote your best interests. If you have a **written** agency agreement, the agent can also help you prepare and submit a written offer to the seller.

A *buyer’s agent* can be compensated in different ways. For example, you can pay the agent out of your own pocket. Or the agent may seek compensation from the seller or listing agent first, but require you to pay if the listing agent refuses. Whatever the case, be sure your compensation arrangement with your *buyer’s agent* is spelled out in a buyer agency agreement before you make an offer to purchase property and that you carefully read and understand the compensation provision.

Dual Agent

You may permit an agent or firm to represent you **and** the seller at the same time. This “dual agency relationship” is most likely to happen if you become interested in a property listed with your *buyer’s agent* or the agent’s firm. If this occurs and you have not already agreed to a dual agency relationship in your (written or oral) buyer agency agreement, your *buyer’s agent* will ask you to amend the buyer agency agreement or sign a separate agreement or document permitting him or her to act as agent for both you and the seller. It may be difficult for a *dual agent* to advance the interests of both the buyer and seller. Nevertheless, a *dual agent* must

treat buyers and sellers fairly and equally. Although the *dual agent* owes them the same duties, buyers and sellers can prohibit *dual agents* from divulging **certain** confidential information about them to the other party.

Some firms also offer a form of dual agency called “designated agency” where one agent in the firm represents the seller and another agent represents the buyer. This option (when available) may allow each “designated agent” to more fully represent each party.

If you choose the “dual agency” option, remember that since a *dual agent*’s loyalty is divided between parties with competing interests, it is especially important that you have a clear understanding of • what your relationship is with the *dual agent* and • what the agent will be doing for you in the transaction. This can best be accomplished by putting the agreement in writing at the earliest possible time.

Seller’s Agent Working With a Buyer

If the real estate agent or firm that you contact does not offer *buyer agency* or you do not want them to act as your *buyer agent*, you can still work with the firm and its agents. However, they will be acting as the *seller’s agent* (or “subagent”). The agent can still help you find and purchase property and provide many of the same services as a *buyer’s agent*. The agent must be fair with you and provide you with any “material facts” (such as a leaky roof) about properties.

But remember, the agent represents the seller - not you - and therefore must try to obtain for the seller the best possible price and terms for the seller’s property. Furthermore, a *seller’s agent* is required to give the seller any information about you (even personal, financial or confidential information) that would help the seller in the sale of his or her property. Agents must tell you *in writing* if they are *sellers’ agents* before you say anything that can help the seller. But **until you are sure that an agent is not a seller’s agent, you should avoid saying anything you do not want a seller to know.**

Sellers’ agents are compensated by the sellers.

FOR BUYER/SELLER

This is not a contract

Date

Firm Name REALHomes Services and Solutions

Agent Name Sherry M Price

License Number 280923

Disclosure of Seller Subagency

(Complete, if applicable)

☐ *When showing you property and assisting you in the purchase of a property, the above agent and firm will represent the SELLER. For more information, see “Seller’s Agent Working with a Buyer” in the brochure.*

Agent’s Initials Acknowledging Disclosure:

SMP
The North Carolina Real Estate Commission
P.O. Box 17100 • Raleigh, North Carolina 27619-7100
919/875-3700 • Web Site: www.ncrec.state.nc.us

REC 3.45 1/1/09

WORKING WITH REAL ESTATE AGENTS

Agents must retain this acknowledgment for their files.

This is not a contract

By signing, I acknowledge that the agent named below furnished a copy of this brochure and reviewed it with me.

Buyer or Seller Name (Print or Type)

Buyer or Seller Name (Print or Type)

Buyer or Seller Signature

Buyer or Seller Signature

Date

Date

Firm Name

*Agent Name and License
Number*

***Disclosure of Seller Subagency
(Complete, if applicable)***

☐ *When showing you property and assisting you in the purchase of a property, the above agent and firm will represent the SELLER. For more information, see "Seller's Agent Working with a Buyer" in the brochure.*

Buyer's Initials Acknowledging Disclosure: NOT ALLOWED

IMPORTANT!

Lead From Paint, Dust, and Soil in and Around Your Home Can Be Dangerous if Not Managed Properly

- Children under 6 years old are most at risk for lead poisoning in your home.
- Lead exposure can harm young children and babies even before they are born.
- Homes, schools, and child care facilities built before 1978 are likely to contain lead-based paint.
- Even children who seem healthy may have dangerous levels of lead in their bodies.
- Disturbing surfaces with lead-based paint or removing lead-based paint improperly can increase the danger to your family.
- People can get lead into their bodies by breathing or swallowing lead dust, or by eating soil or paint chips containing lead.
- People have many options for reducing lead hazards. Generally, lead-based paint that is in good condition is not a hazard (see page 10).



Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home



United States
Environmental
Protection Agency



United States
Consumer Product
Safety Commission



United States
Department of Housing
and Urban Development

Are You Planning to Buy or Rent a Home Built Before 1978?

Did you know that many homes built before 1978 have **lead-based paint**? Lead from paint, chips, and dust can pose serious health hazards.

Read this entire brochure to learn:

- How lead gets into the body
- About health effects of lead
- What you can do to protect your family
- Where to go for more information

Before renting or buying a pre-1978 home or apartment, federal law requires:

- Sellers must disclose known information on lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards before selling a house.
- Real estate sales contracts must include a specific warning statement about lead-based paint. Buyers have up to 10 days to check for lead.
- Landlords must disclose known information on lead-based paint and lead-based paint hazards before leases take effect. Leases must include a specific warning statement about lead-based paint.

If undertaking renovations, repairs, or painting (RRP) projects in your pre-1978 home or apartment:

- Read EPA's pamphlet, *The Lead-Safe Certified Guide to Renovate Right*, to learn about the lead-safe work practices that contractors are required to follow when working in your home (see page 12).



Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)

The CPSC protects the public against unreasonable risk of injury from consumer products through education, safety standards activities, and enforcement. Contact CPSC for further information regarding consumer product safety and regulations.

CPSC

4330 East West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814-4421
1-800-638-2772
cpsc.gov or saferproducts.gov

U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

HUD's mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality affordable homes for all. Contact HUD's Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control for further information regarding the Lead Safe Housing Rule, which protects families in pre-1978 assisted housing, and for the lead hazard control and research grant programs.

HUD

451 Seventh Street, SW, Room 8236
Washington, DC 20410-3000
(202) 402-7698
hud.gov/offices/lead/

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U. S. EPA Washington DC 20460
U. S. CPSC Bethesda MD 20814
U. S. HUD Washington DC 20410

EPA-747-K-12-001
September 2013

Simple Steps to Protect Your Family from Lead Hazards

If you think your home has lead-based paint:

- Don't try to remove lead-based paint yourself.
- Always keep painted surfaces in good condition to minimize deterioration.
- Get your home checked for lead hazards. Find a certified inspector or risk assessor at epa.gov/lead.
- Talk to your landlord about fixing surfaces with peeling or chipping paint.
- Regularly clean floors, window sills, and other surfaces.
- Take precautions to avoid exposure to lead dust when remodeling.
- When renovating, repairing, or painting, hire only EPA- or state-approved Lead-Safe certified renovation firms.
- Before buying, renting, or renovating your home, have it checked for lead-based paint.
- Consult your health care provider about testing your children for lead. Your pediatrician can check for lead with a simple blood test.
- Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.
- Make sure children avoid fatty (or high fat) foods and eat nutritious meals high in iron and calcium.
- Remove shoes or wipe soil off shoes before entering your house.

Lead Gets into the Body in Many Ways

Adults and children can get lead into their bodies if they:

- Breathe in lead dust (especially during activities such as renovations, repairs, or painting that disturb painted surfaces).
- Swallow lead dust that has settled on food, food preparation surfaces, and other places.
- Eat paint chips or soil that contains lead.

Lead is especially dangerous to children under the age of 6.

- At this age, children's brains and nervous systems are more sensitive to the damaging effects of lead.
- Children's growing bodies absorb more lead.
- Babies and young children often put their hands and other objects in their mouths. These objects can have lead dust on them.



Women of childbearing age should know that lead is dangerous to a developing fetus.

- Women with a high lead level in their system before or during pregnancy risk exposing the fetus to lead through the placenta during fetal development.

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Regional Offices

The mission of EPA is to protect human health and the environment. Your Regional EPA Office can provide further information regarding regulations and lead protection programs.

Region 1 (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 1
5 Post Office Square, Suite 100, OES 05-4
Boston, MA 02109-3912
(888) 372-7341

Region 2 (New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 2
2890 Woodbridge Avenue
Building 205, Mail Stop 225
Edison, NJ 08837-3679
(732) 321-6671

Region 3 (Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, DC, West Virginia)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 3
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 814-2088

Region 4 (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 4
AFC Tower, 12th Floor, Air, Pesticides & Toxics
61 Forsyth Street, SW
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 562-8998

Region 5 (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 5 (DT-8J)
77 West Jackson Boulevard
Chicago, IL 60604-3666
(312) 886-7836

Region 6 (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and 66 Tribes)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, 12th Floor
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
(214) 665-2704

Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 7
11201 Renner Blvd.
WWPD/TOPE
Lenexa, KS 66219
(800) 223-0425

Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 8
1595 Wynkoop St.
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 312-6966

Region 9 (Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 9 (CMD-4-2)
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 947-4280

Region 10 (Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington)

Regional Lead Contact
U.S. EPA Region 10
Solid Waste & Toxics Unit (WCM-128)
1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 900
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 553-1200

For More Information

The National Lead Information Center

Learn how to protect children from lead poisoning and get other information about lead hazards on the Web at epa.gov/lead and hud.gov/lead, or call **1-800-424-LEAD (5323)**.

EPA's Safe Drinking Water Hotline

For information about lead in drinking water, call **1-800-426-4791**, or visit epa.gov/lead for information about lead in drinking water.

Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) Hotline

For information on lead in toys and other consumer products, or to report an unsafe consumer product or a product-related injury, call **1-800-638-2772**, or visit CPSC's website at cpsc.gov or saferproducts.gov.

State and Local Health and Environmental Agencies

Some states, tribes, and cities have their own rules related to lead-based paint. Check with your local agency to see which laws apply to you. Most agencies can also provide information on finding a lead abatement firm in your area, and on possible sources of financial aid for reducing lead hazards. Receive up-to-date address and phone information for your state or local contacts on the Web at epa.gov/lead, or contact the National Lead Information Center at **1-800-424-LEAD**.

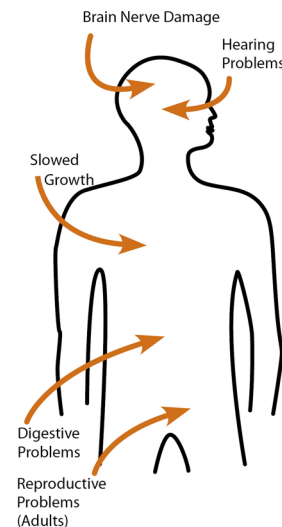
Hearing- or speech-challenged individuals may access any of the phone numbers in this brochure through TTY by calling the toll-free Federal Relay Service at **1-800-877-8339**.

Health Effects of Lead

Lead affects the body in many ways. It is important to know that even exposure to low levels of lead can severely harm children.

In children, exposure to lead can cause:

- Nervous system and kidney damage
- Learning disabilities, attention deficit disorder, and decreased intelligence
- Speech, language, and behavior problems
- Poor muscle coordination
- Decreased muscle and bone growth
- Hearing damage



While low-lead exposure is most common, exposure to high amounts of lead can have devastating effects on children, including seizures, unconsciousness, and, in some cases, death.

Although children are especially susceptible to lead exposure, lead can be dangerous for adults, too.

In adults, exposure to lead can cause:

- Harm to a developing fetus
- Increased chance of high blood pressure during pregnancy
- Fertility problems (in men and women)
- High blood pressure
- Digestive problems
- Nerve disorders
- Memory and concentration problems
- Muscle and joint pain

Check Your Family for Lead

Get your children and home tested if you think your home has lead.

Children's blood lead levels tend to increase rapidly from 6 to 12 months of age, and tend to peak at 18 to 24 months of age.

Consult your doctor for advice on testing your children. A simple blood test can detect lead. Blood lead tests are usually recommended for:

- Children at ages 1 and 2
- Children or other family members who have been exposed to high levels of lead
- Children who should be tested under your state or local health screening plan

Your doctor can explain what the test results mean and if more testing will be needed.

Other Sources of Lead

While paint, dust, and soil are the most common sources of lead, other lead sources also exist:

- **Drinking water.** Your home might have plumbing with lead or lead solder. You cannot see, smell, or taste lead, and boiling your water will not get rid of lead. If you think your plumbing might contain lead:

- Use only cold water for drinking and cooking.
- Run water for 15 to 30 seconds before drinking it, especially if you have not used your water for a few hours.

Call your local health department or water supplier to find out about testing your water, or visit [epa.gov/lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead) for EPA's lead in drinking water information.

- **Lead smelters** or other industries that release lead into the air.
- **Your job.** If you work with lead, you could bring it home on your body or clothes. Shower and change clothes before coming home. Launder your work clothes separately from the rest of your family's clothes.
- **Hobbies** that use lead, such as making pottery or stained glass, or refinishing furniture. Call your local health department for information about hobbies that may use lead.
- Old **toys** and **furniture** may have been painted with lead-containing paint. Older toys and other children's products may have parts that contain lead.⁴
- Food and liquids cooked or stored in **lead crystal** or **lead-glazed pottery or porcelain** may contain lead.
- Folk remedies, such as "**greta**" and "**azarcon**," used to treat an upset stomach.

⁴ In 1978, the federal government banned toys, other children's products, and furniture with lead-containing paint (16 CFR 1303). In 2008, the federal government banned lead in most children's products. The federal government currently bans lead in excess of 100 ppm by weight in most children's products (76 FR 44463).

Renovating, Remodeling, or Repairing (RRP) a Home with Lead-Based Paint

If you hire a contractor to conduct renovation, repair, or painting (RRP) projects in your pre-1978 home or childcare facility (such as pre-school and kindergarten), your contractor must:

- Be a Lead-Safe Certified firm approved by EPA or an EPA-authorized state program
- Use qualified trained individuals (Lead-Safe Certified renovators) who follow specific lead-safe work practices to prevent lead contamination
- Provide a copy of EPA's lead hazard information document, *The Lead-Safe Certified Guide to Renovate Right*



RRP contractors working in pre-1978 homes and childcare facilities must follow lead-safe work practices that:

- **Contain the work area.** The area must be contained so that dust and debris do not escape from the work area. Warning signs must be put up, and plastic or other impermeable material and tape must be used.
- **Avoid renovation methods that generate large amounts of lead-contaminated dust.** Some methods generate so much lead-contaminated dust that their use is prohibited. They are:
 - Open-flame burning or torching
 - Sanding, grinding, planing, needle gunning, or blasting with power tools and equipment not equipped with a shroud and HEPA vacuum attachment and
 - Using a heat gun at temperatures greater than 1100°F
- **Clean up thoroughly.** The work area should be cleaned up daily. When all the work is done, the area must be cleaned up using special cleaning methods.
- **Dispose of waste properly.** Collect and seal waste in a heavy duty bag or sheeting. When transported, ensure that waste is contained to prevent release of dust and debris.

To learn more about EPA's requirements for RRP projects visit [epa.gov/getleadsafe](https://www.epa.gov/getleadsafe), or read *The Lead-Safe Certified Guide to Renovate Right*.

Where Lead-Based Paint Is Found

In general, the older your home or childcare facility, the more likely it has lead-based paint.¹

Many homes, including private, federally-assisted, federally-owned housing, and childcare facilities built before 1978 have lead-based paint. In 1978, the federal government banned consumer uses of lead-containing paint.²

Learn how to determine if paint is lead-based paint on page 7.

Lead can be found:

- In homes and childcare facilities in the city, country, or suburbs,
- In private and public single-family homes and apartments,
- On surfaces inside and outside of the house, and
- In soil around a home. (Soil can pick up lead from exterior paint or other sources, such as past use of leaded gas in cars.)

Learn more about where lead is found at [epa.gov/lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead).

¹ "Lead-based paint" is currently defined by the federal government as paint with lead levels greater than or equal to 1.0 milligram per square centimeter (mg/cm), or more than 0.5% by weight.

² "Lead-containing paint" is currently defined by the federal government as lead in new dried paint in excess of 90 parts per million (ppm) by weight.

Identifying Lead-Based Paint and Lead-Based Paint Hazards

Deteriorating lead-based paint (peeling, chipping, chalking, cracking, or damaged paint) is a hazard and needs immediate attention. **Lead-based paint** may also be a hazard when found on surfaces that children can chew or that get a lot of wear and tear, such as:

- On windows and window sills
- Doors and door frames
- Stairs, railings, banisters, and porches

Lead-based paint is usually not a hazard if it is in good condition and if it is not on an impact or friction surface like a window.

Lead dust can form when lead-based paint is scraped, sanded, or heated. Lead dust also forms when painted surfaces containing lead bump or rub together. Lead paint chips and dust can get on surfaces and objects that people touch. Settled lead dust can reenter the air when the home is vacuumed or swept, or when people walk through it. EPA currently defines the following levels of lead in dust as hazardous:

- 40 micrograms per square foot ($\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$) and higher for floors, including carpeted floors
- 250 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$ and higher for interior window sills

Lead in soil can be a hazard when children play in bare soil or when people bring soil into the house on their shoes. EPA currently defines the following levels of lead in soil as hazardous:

- 400 parts per million (ppm) and higher in play areas of bare soil
- 1,200 ppm (average) and higher in bare soil in the remainder of the yard

Remember, lead from paint chips—which you can see—and lead dust—which you may not be able to see—both can be hazards.

The only way to find out if paint, dust, or soil lead hazards exist is to test for them. The next page describes how to do this.

Reducing Lead Hazards, continued

If your home has had lead abatement work done or if the housing is receiving federal assistance, once the work is completed, dust cleanup activities must be conducted until clearance testing indicates that lead dust levels are below the following levels:

- 40 micrograms per square foot ($\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$) for floors, including carpeted floors
- 250 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$ for interior windows sills
- 400 $\mu\text{g}/\text{ft}^2$ for window troughs

For help in locating certified lead abatement professionals in your area, call your state or local agency (see pages 14 and 15), or visit [epa.gov/lead](https://www.epa.gov/lead), or call 1-800-424-LEAD.

Reducing Lead Hazards

Disturbing lead-based paint or removing lead improperly can increase the hazard to your family by spreading even more lead dust around the house.

- In addition to day-to-day cleaning and good nutrition, you can **temporarily** reduce lead-based paint hazards by taking actions, such as repairing damaged painted surfaces and planting grass to cover lead-contaminated soil. These actions are not permanent solutions and will need ongoing attention.
- You can minimize exposure to lead when renovating, repairing, or painting by hiring an EPA- or state-certified renovator who is trained in the use of lead-safe work practices. If you are a do-it-yourselfer, learn how to use lead-safe work practices in your home.
- To remove lead hazards permanently, you should hire a certified lead abatement contractor. Abatement (or permanent hazard elimination) methods include removing, sealing, or enclosing lead-based paint with special materials. Just painting over the hazard with regular paint is not permanent control.



Always use a certified contractor who is trained to address lead hazards safely.

- Hire a Lead-Safe Certified firm (see page 12) to perform renovation, repair, or painting (RRP) projects that disturb painted surfaces.
- To correct lead hazards permanently, hire a certified lead abatement professional. This will ensure your contractor knows how to work safely and has the proper equipment to clean up thoroughly.

Certified contractors will employ qualified workers and follow strict safety rules as set by their state or by the federal government.

Checking Your Home for Lead

You can get your home tested for lead in several different ways:

- A lead-based paint **inspection** tells you if your home has lead-based paint and where it is located. It won't tell you whether your home currently has lead hazards. A trained and certified testing professional, called a lead-based paint inspector, will conduct a paint inspection using methods, such as:
 - Portable x-ray fluorescence (XRF) machine
 - Lab tests of paint samples
- A **risk assessment** tells you if your home currently has any lead hazards from lead in paint, dust, or soil. It also tells you what actions to take to address any hazards. A trained and certified testing professional, called a risk assessor, will:
 - Sample paint that is deteriorated on doors, windows, floors, stairs, and walls
 - Sample dust near painted surfaces and sample bare soil in the yard
 - Get lab tests of paint, dust, and soil samples
- A combination inspection and risk assessment tells you if your home has any lead-based paint and if your home has any lead hazards, and where both are located.



Be sure to read the report provided to you after your inspection or risk assessment is completed, and ask questions about anything you do not understand.

Checking Your Home for Lead, continued

In preparing for renovation, repair, or painting work in a pre-1978 home, Lead-Safe Certified renovators (see page 12) may:

- Take paint chip samples to determine if lead-based paint is present in the area planned for renovation and send them to an EPA-recognized lead lab for analysis. In housing receiving federal assistance, the person collecting these samples must be a certified lead-based paint inspector or risk assessor
- Use EPA-recognized tests kits to determine if lead-based paint is absent (but not in housing receiving federal assistance)
- Presume that lead-based paint is present and use lead-safe work practices

There are state and federal programs in place to ensure that testing is done safely, reliably, and effectively. Contact your state or local agency for more information, visit epa.gov/lead, or call **1-800-424-LEAD (5323)** for a list of contacts in your area.³

What You Can Do Now to Protect Your Family

If you suspect that your house has lead-based paint hazards, you can take some immediate steps to reduce your family's risk:

- If you rent, notify your landlord of peeling or chipping paint.
- Keep painted surfaces clean and free of dust. Clean floors, window frames, window sills, and other surfaces weekly. Use a mop or sponge with warm water and a general all-purpose cleaner. (Remember: never mix ammonia and bleach products together because they can form a dangerous gas.)
- Carefully clean up paint chips immediately without creating dust.
- Thoroughly rinse sponges and mop heads often during cleaning of dirty or dusty areas, and again afterward.
- Wash your hands and your children's hands often, especially before they eat and before nap time and bed time.
- Keep play areas clean. Wash bottles, pacifiers, toys, and stuffed animals regularly.
- Keep children from chewing window sills or other painted surfaces, or eating soil.
- When renovating, repairing, or painting, hire only EPA- or state-approved Lead-Safe Certified renovation firms (see page 12).
- Clean or remove shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from soil.
- Make sure children avoid fatty (or high fat) foods and eat nutritious meals high in iron and calcium. Children with good diets absorb less lead.

³ Hearing- or speech-challenged individuals may access this number through TTY by calling the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8399.