

Health Hazards of Lead Based Paint



Use of Lead Based Paints in New Zealand

The use of lead based paints on New Zealand buildings, a practice common until the 1980's, has left a legacy of problems for those involved in repainting and redecorating.

Most pre 1970 homes can be assumed to contain lead based paint. This may have been covered over by more recent decoration. The risk is usually negligible unless paintwork is an advanced state of deterioration or inappropriate methods are used to remove paint.

Health Hazards

Lead is a highly toxic and accumulative poison. It can cause prolonged toxic effects that may be acute (after intense exposure) or chronic (from ongoing low exposure). Lead from paint is mainly taken into the body by inhalation of dust or fumes, or by eating paint fragments or contaminated materials.

Early stages of lead poisoning are similar to the flu. Symptoms may be vague and might include vomiting, stomach pains, headaches, poor appetite, irritability, constipation and difficulty sleeping.

Medical advice should be sought if there is any concern about lead poisoning, as it can lead to serious health problems and may result in death.

Badly deteriorating paint and/ or poor redecorating practices can create health risks. Those most at risk include:

1. Young children or pets who chew items containing lead based paints or who eat contaminated material, such as paint fragments or contaminated soil
2. People in environments where past or current paint removal operations have created lead rich dust
3. People involved in paint removal operations (home handypersons or contractors)

NOTE: - Master Painters NZ Association strongly recommends anyone involved with redecoration of properties that were built prior to 1970 to attend a MPNZA Lead Based Training course. These courses are run regularly across NZ, the details of which are available from the contact below.

Master Painters NZ Association, PO Box 40355, Upper Hutt 5140 – PH 04 472 5870

Email nationaloffice@masterpainters.org.nz www.masterpainters.co.nz