

ARTICLE (MEDIUM VERSION)

Headline:

If You're Not Lead-Safe Certified, Lead Paint Could Cost You Big Time.

Body Copy:

Think lead paint doesn't affect your business? Think again.

An Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rule to protect children from lead exposure mandates that all renovation and repair contractors working in pre-1978 homes, schools, and day care centers who disrupt more than six square feet of lead paint are required to become EPA Certified in lead-safe work practices. Renovation contractors are required to take a one-day training course and firms must send a short application to the EPA. If not, they could face thousands of dollars in fines, and – even worst – be responsible for harming their customers.

Jim Jones, Assistant Administrator of the EPA's Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention, said there is a simple reason for the rule: protecting people's health, especially children.

"Childhood lead poisoning still occurs and is a preventable disease, and our goal is to eliminate it," said Jones.

Many renovation contractors think the issue of lead poisoning went away years ago, or that they are doing all that needs to be done to avoid it. In fact, research shows that renovation contractors like carpenters, plumbers, electricians, painters and window replacement experts can inadvertently expose children to harmful levels of lead from invisible dust disturbed during jobs they perform every day.

Renovation contracting firms must register with the EPA and pay a fee to become an EPA Lead-Safe Certified Firm. In addition, individual renovation contractors who will be doing the work or repair must take a one-day training course from an EPA-accredited training provider to become a certified renovator. EPA certification for both firms and individuals is good for five years. Re-certification will be required beginning in 2015 for many renovation firms and individual renovation contractors.

"Getting lead-safe certified is the right thing to do for renovation contractors, their customers, and their employees, and especially for children who spend time in or near spaces that are being renovated," said Jones.

The rule is designed to provide significant benefits, in particular to children's health and learning potential, yet the EPA is mindful of the relatively small added costs that may result from complying with this important rule. The EPA maintains its consumer campaign designed to raise awareness of the dangers of lead paint poisoning, and to encourage consumers to choose to hire only renovation

contractors who are trained and possess the Lead-Safe Certified logo, which contains a firm-specific number.

For additional information including how your firm can get Lead-Safe Certified and where to find an EPA-accredited trainer in your area, visit epa.gov/getleadsafe or call 800-424-LEAD today.

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