

APARTMENTS WE LIVE HERE

LEAD-BASED PAINT

Growing awareness in the 1970s of the deleterious effects of lead on young children's health resulted in the enactment of a number of laws that limited the concentration of lead or totally eliminated lead from a variety of sources. Lead-based paint was banned for use on residential properties in 1978. Lead was also removed from automotive fuel, plumbing solder, food cans and other consumer products ranging from crayons to candles to cosmetics.

NMHC/NAA VIEWPOINT

NMHC/NAA members are committed to providing healthy homes for the 35 million residents of their apartment communities. NMHC/NAA provide their members with the latest information on federal regulations that address the presence of lead-based paint and otherwise govern activities that disturb lead-coated surfaces on residential properties.

EMISSIONS FROM GENERAL AVIATION FUEL ARE THE LARGEST CONTRIBUTOR OF LEAD TO THE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT. LEAD IN AVIATION GAS REMAINS UNREGULATED BY EPA.

According to health scientists, these efforts have resulted in a significant decrease in the blood lead level across the population, including in vulnerable children. However, new information suggests that even lower levels of lead exposure may be associated with health problems in children. As a result, in 2012, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reduced the blood lead level of concern for children under six years of age from 10 ug/dl to 5 ug/dl. This reference level is continually updated based on the ongoing results of children who are tested.

The best way to prevent harm from lead is to prevent exposure to lead hazards. Several federal regulations specifically address lead-based paint in housing. Housing providers are required to disclose to prospective renters the presence of any lead-based paint or assume that such paint is present in properties constructed prior to 1978 unless a certified inspector using specific methods determines otherwise. In addition, workers who disturb paint in the course of routine repair and maintenance activities or in the course of property renovations are required to be trained in EPA/HUD-approved work practices and must be certified by EPA or work under the direct supervision of an EPA-certified individual. Occupational Safety and Health Administration OSHA regulations require air monitoring for jobs that generate lead dust over certain regulated levels.

Despite the documented improvements in blood lead levels, EPA is expanding already stringent regulations to further reduce permissible lead levels in air and drinking water, in coated surfaces and in dust and soil. EPA has indicated that it is considering a modification of the lead hazard standard, including the definition of lead-based paint. The agency is also considering a proposed rule to expand the scope of the Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule, which currently applies to pre-1978 housing.

EPA has failed to demonstrate a public health reason for these changes. Congress should utilize its oversight authority to insist that EPA evaluate existing regulatory programs and industry practices that address potential lead-based paint hazards before implementing expansive, duplicative programs.

Learn more at nmhc.org and naahq.org

