
Lead Hazards in Schools

What is Lead?

- Lead is a naturally occurring metal found in the environment
- Lead has been used by people for thousands of years
- When it gets into the body it is a poison and harms people

How Are People Exposed to Lead?

- Lead can enter the body by breathing or swallowing dust that contains lead
- Lead poisoning occurs when lead builds up in the body
- There is no healthy level of lead

Children and Lead Poisoning

- Lead is most dangerous to children because their bodies and brains are still developing
- Small children that are crawling and putting their hands in their mouths can ingest lead dust



What are the Signs of Lead Poisoning?

- Children exposed to lead may not look or act sick
- The danger can be hard to see
- The only way to know if a child has lead poisoning is to have their blood tested

Health Effects Include:

- Brain damage and lower intelligence
- Behavior and learning problems
- Impaired speech and language
- Slowed growth
- Kidney and liver damage
- Hearing damage



What are Common Sources of Lead?

- Lead-based paint is the most common cause of childhood lead poisoning in Oregon
- Other sources include:
 - Soil around the exterior of houses painted with lead-based paint
 - Water pipes, fixtures and solder that contain lead
 - Ceramic pottery may have lead in the glaze
 - Hobbies, such as making fishing weights, stained glass and bullets
 - Homeopathic recipes
 - Lead in the food that we eat



Lead-based Paint Regulation in Schools

- If a school was built before 1978, and children under six years of age frequent the school, the Renovation, Repair or Painting (RRP) Rules apply
- RRP Rules require specific lead safe work practices to be followed
- School personnel must be certified by the Oregon Health Authority to perform any RRP work. Information available at www.healthoregon.org/lead
- If hiring a professional, only utilize RRP certified contractors licensed through the Construction Contractors Board



How to Test for Lead-based Paint

- Certified Lead Inspection and Abatement Firms can test for and remove lead-based paint hazards
- A list of professionals are available on the [OHA website](#).

How to Maintain a School with Lead-based Paint

- Inspect for signs of chipping, peeling or deteriorated paint
- Check for areas where painted surfaces are creating lead dust (doors, windows, cabinets)
- Clean up paint chips immediately and keep paint in good condition
- Clean areas where lead paint chips or dust may be present with a wet cloth, mop or sponge
- Repair damaged areas and follow lead-safe work practices
- Know when to call the professionals



Lead in Water

- Test to find out if the water contains lead
 - Use Environmental Protection Agency's [3 T's for Reducing Lead in Drinking Water in Schools](#)
 - Only use [OHA-accredited drinking water laboratories](#)
 - The Environmental Protection Agency recommends all school water outlets meet a standard of 20 parts per billion (ppb) or less

Lead in Water

- If any test result exceeds 20 ppb:
 - Stop access to the water outlet
 - Communicate with students, staff and parents
 - Take corrective action to replace pipes or fixtures contributing to the elevated lead level
- The local County Health Department, or the Oregon Health Authority provides consultation and advice as needed

