

Lead

Lead-based paint has been banned since 1978, but many older structures still have this paint on walls, woodwork, siding, windows, and doors. Construction and demolition workers can be exposed to lead contamination by cutting, scraping, sanding, heating, burning, or blasting lead-based paint from building components, metal bridges and metal storage tanks. In addition to exposure to workers, lead-based paint debris or dust can also make its way into soil, potentially contaminating surface waters. Lead poisoning is a serious health threat for adults and is especially damaging to young children.

In most states, C&D debris contaminated with lead-based paint must be managed in different ways depending upon where the debris came from and what it is. For example, lead-based paint waste (e.g., paint chips, dust, and sludges) from removal or remediation activities and C&D debris from commercial or industrial sites that is contaminated with lead-based paint must be managed as RCRA hazardous waste if a representative sample meets the toxicity characteristic (D008). However, in most states, contractors working to renovate, remodel, or abate lead-based paint in homes are allowed to dispose of lead-based paint waste as household garbage. In many states, contractors who generate the waste in this manner do not need to determine whether the waste meets the toxicity characteristic under RCRA.

In all cases, when encountering lead-based paint waste or C&D debris that is contaminated with lead-based paint, contractors are urged to contact their state authority to determine which rules apply.

Most states operate training and certification programs for lead-based paint activities in target housing and child occupied facilities. There are 12 states (AL, AK, FL, ID, MT, NM, NY, NV, SC, SD, WA, and WY) that are not operating their own authorized lead training program for target housing and child-occupied facilities. For these states EPA operates a Federal training and certification program. In many states, the rules for training and certification extend to certain construction activities, such as those associated with commercial buildings or residential housing. Check out the rules in your state before engaging in lead-based paint activities.

