

LEAD-BASED PAINT

Lead is a known health risk and must be handled properly. Never dry sand or sandblast lead-based paint.

Paints with high levels of lead can be found in homes or structures built before 1970. Sometimes these buildings may have been renovated and lead-based paint is covered by more recently applied paint. Lead-based paint is most likely to be found on window frames, doors, skirting boards, kitchen and bathroom cupboards, exterior walls, gutters, metal surfaces and fascias. It may also be found on interior walls, ceilings and areas with enamel paint.

Health effects of lead

Lead particles can be inhaled or swallowed. Either way, lead is absorbed and can accumulate in the body. Untreated lead poisoning in adults, children and pets can be fatal. Children are affected more severely and at lower blood levels than adults. Common short-term symptoms of lead poisoning are shown below:

- Loss of appetite, constipation or nausea.
- Fatigue, irritability or headaches.
- Muscle weakness.

Continued exposure or high levels of exposure can have far more serious effects such as:

- Abdominal cramps or vomiting.
- Confusion, unconsciousness or vomiting.
- Paralysis (wrist drop).

Working with lead-based paint

Homeowners and occupiers

The Australian Government [Department of the Environment and Energy](#) has prepared the [Lead Alert: The six step guide to painting your home—5th edition](#) to help homeowners plan how to safely address lead-based paints in the home. It aims to provide basic information on the risks and considerations before starting any work.

Ideally, lead-based paint should be assessed and remediated by trained professionals.

Lead-based paint

When is lead-based paint a problem?

Lead becomes a risk:

- If it is accessible to children.
- If it is used for water collection:
 - When found on roofing, guttering, downpipes, or anything else used to fill a water tank or container.
 - When found in or on a water tank or anything else used to store potable water (water used for drinking/showering/cooking etc.).
- When the paint deteriorates and becomes powdery or flaky.
- During paint removal.

You will need to remove lead-based paint completely if you find it anywhere near where children can access or around water tanks. In most other cases you may have the option to paint over or cover lead-based paint with other material.

Working with lead-based paint - Continued

Builders, contractors and commercial/industrial premises

Builders or contractors for a homeowner, and workers at commercial/industrial premises have obligations to ensure they do not endanger their own health and safety or that of the home occupants or neighbours.

The Queensland Government Department of [Workplace Health and Safety](#) have prepared a number of resources for [working with lead](#).

Lead-based Paint Complaints

Activities investigated by Queensland Government

Contact [Workplace Health and Safety](#) if you have concerns with activities carried out by a builder or contractor, or activities occurring at a commercial/industrial premises.

Contact [Queensland Health](#) if you have concerns in relation to lead that:

- ✓ Is accessible to children.
- ✓ Is used for water collection:
 - When found on roofing, guttering, downpipes, or anything else used to fill a water tank or container.
 - When found in or on a water tank or anything else used to store potable water (water used for drinking/showering/cooking etc).

Activities investigated by Council

Council investigates the release of lead by homeowners and occupiers of residential premises.

The most common complaint is the sanding of lead-based painted material or structures by a homeowner on residential land.

Contact Council if you have concerns with the way your neighbour is working with lead.

Please note this fact sheet may be updated by Council at any time, with the most recent version available on Council's website. If you have a printed copy, please see Council's website to ensure you have the latest version.