

MILLS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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Public Health
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Iowans Urged to Hire Only Certified Lead-Safe Renovators

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) reminds Iowans to ask if their home painting and remodeling contractors are certified as a lead-safe renovator. Since April, 2010, Iowa law (Iowa Administrative Code 641, Chapter 70) has required all companies or individuals who work in homes and child-occupied facilities (daycare centers, preschools, kindergartens) built before 1978 to be certified by IDPH as a lead-safe renovator. The ‘grace period’ for enforcement of the law ends this year and enforcement of the law will begin September 1.

“Summer is prime painting and remodeling season,” said IDPH Director, Dr. Mariannette Miller-Meeks. “Iowans should hire only certified contractors - it’s the law and it’s important for their safety.”

Most of Iowa’s pre-1978 homes contain lead-based paint. Young children who live or spend time in these homes become lead-poisoned when they put paint chips or exterior soil in their mouths, or when they get house dust and soil on their hands and put their hands in their mouths. In addition, adults who remodel or repaint these homes may be lead-poisoned if they don’t use lead-safe work practices.

“In children, even low blood lead levels can affect intelligence, hearing and growth,” said IDPH Lead Poisoning Prevention Bureau Chief Rita Gergely. “At very high blood lead levels, children can have severe brain damage, or even die.” In Iowa, seven percent of children younger than 6 years of age have lead poisoning; this is more than four times the national average. Painting and remodeling can disturb paint, and in older homes, this can result in lead dust and chips that can be harmful. By requiring painting and remodeling contractors to be certified as lead-safe, children, adults and the contractors themselves will be protected from the dangers of lead poisoning.

To learn more about the lead-safe renovator certification requirements, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/lead_poisoning_prevention.asp#regulations. If you have specific questions, please contact us here at Mills County Public Health, 712-527-9699.