

Auckland Regional Public Health Service

Rātonga Hauora ā Iwi o Tamaki Makaurau



Working with the people of Auckland, Counties Manukau and Waitemata

Lead Paint and Lead Poisoning

Exposure to lead paint is a leading cause of lead poisoning in children and adults. Young children (particularly those under five years old) are more likely to ingest the paint (as it may taste sweet) or lead contaminated soil. Adults are more likely to have inhaled fumes (from using a heat gun to remove paint) or dust (from sanding paint).

Lead Paint Testing

Note that different surfaces may have been painted with different paints and that the older the paint, the higher the concentration of lead might have been. With older buildings, some timber may have been replaced during repairs.

For each area to be tested, we need a sample of two or three paint flakes (about the size of a five cent piece or larger). Make sure to include the underneath layers of paint as they are more likely to contain lead. The sample should be taken with a knife if necessary to collect all the lower layers of paint.

Please keep each sample separate, in either a labelled sealable plastic bag or a labelled envelope. Post samples to:

Technical Officer (Environmental Health)
Auckland Regional Public Health Service
Private Bag 92 605
Symonds St
Auckland 1150

Ph (09) 623 4600 to check whether staff are available to test paint delivered to our office while you wait.

There is no charge for the test.

If you have many samples to test you should consider purchasing a lead paint test kit. Paint stores may have test kits for instant testing of customer samples, or for purchase.

Safe Removal of Lead-based Paint

Lead-based paint can be safely removed by following the OSH/Ministry of Health *Guidelines for the Removal of Lead-based Paint* available from the Auckland Regional Public Health Service. Note that water-blasting is not recommended and heat guns need to be used with care (they can vaporise the lead).

If contractors are hired to remove lead-based paint, then they must follow these Guidelines. If you are in doubt about whether a contractor's work complies with the Guidelines, contact OSH in the first instance, without delay. You can also contact Auckland Regional Public Health Service and your local Council.

Past Soil Contamination

If the building is old consider whether soil near the building may have been contaminated with lead-based paint flakes or dust in the past. As a precaution you could discourage young children from accessing soil up to 1m from the buildings (e.g. avoid locating a sandpit here, use mulch to cover soil). Vegetables grown in soil that may have been contaminated should be washed thoroughly to remove all traces of dirt.