

Vermont Lead Poisoning Prevention Law: What Renters Need to Know

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The Vermont Lead Poisoning Prevention Law requires owners of rental housing built before 1978 to make sure lead paint and coatings are in good condition so they do not cause lead poisoning.

There is no safe level of lead in the body. Lead is extremely toxic when it is breathed in or swallowed. Lead can harm anyone, but babies, young children and pregnant women are at special risk.

Exposure to lead poses a special risk to children because they absorb lead into their systems more easily than adults do. Lead can slow down growth, impair development and learning, and can cause behavior problems.



Lead in Paint or Stain

Before 1978, lead was common in paint and other coatings, like stain and varnish. If you live in a home that was built before 1978, you should assume that all painted and coated surfaces contain lead. You cannot tell if paint or another coating is lead-free unless it has been tested by a licensed lead inspector.

Over time, lead paint and coatings on surfaces crumble into invisible dust — especially from opening and closing doors and windows — that contaminates homes and soil. Even if the home has been repainted since 1978, the opening and closing of doors and windows can release lead dust from the original lead-based paint or coating.

It takes only a small amount of lead-based chips or dust to cause lead poisoning. That is why it is important to keep all painted and coated surfaces in good condition and to frequently clean areas where lead dust can accumulate.



Deterioration of Painted or Coated Surfaces

Look for deterioration of any painted or coated surface. Deterioration is when the paint or coating on surfaces chips, peels, flakes, cracks, or is otherwise damaged. If the paint or coating does not appear smooth and firmly attached to the surface it is on, it needs to be repaired.

Be sure to carefully look in all hard-to-see places. Tell your landlord or property management company if you notice any deterioration. The law only requires your landlord or property management company to make repairs in a room or on the outside of the building if the total area of deterioration is one square foot or more. The Health Department recommends that landlords or property management companies repair any deterioration, no matter how small.

How do I know if my landlord or property manager is complying with the Vermont Lead Poisoning Prevention Law?

To comply with the law, landlords or property management companies are required to perform Inspection, Repair and Cleaning (IRC) Practices that include:

- Giving you a copy of the “Protect Your Family from Lead in Your Home” booklet before your lease starts.
- Inspecting the inside and outside of the property for chipping and peeling paint or coatings every year.
- Having any chipping or peeling paint or coatings repaired by someone with the Vermont Lead-Safe RRPM licenses using lead-safe work practices.
- Filing a yearly IRC Practices compliance statement with the Health Department.
- Giving you a copy of the most recent IRC Practices compliance statement before your lease starts and within 10 days of filing it every year.
- Posting a notice to report deteriorated paint or coatings in a place that is easily seen by all renters.

If you think your landlord has not done these requirements, please talk to your landlord about it first. Or, you can complete a survey online at tinyURL.com/lead-law and the Health Department will look into it.

You can find out if your landlord or property management company has filed an IRC Practices compliance statement within the past year by visiting healthvermont.gov/IRC. Click the link at the top, and then enter in your address.



How can I keep my home safe from lead hazards?

- Contact your landlord or property management company if there is any deterioration of painted or coated surfaces. Send them pictures of the problem area(s) if possible, then:
 - Use plastic sheeting to block off any areas where you see deteriorated paint or coatings.
 - Keep children and pregnant women away.
 - Secure the sheeting on all sides with tape.
 - Use soap and a wet disposable cloth to clean up any paint chips or dust.
- Clean window wells routinely and other high friction areas, such as door frames, using soap and a wet disposable cloth.



Questions?

If you have questions, please email the Asbestos and Lead Regulatory Program at ircpractices@vermont.gov.

Learn more about the Vermont Lead Poisoning Prevention Law at healthvermont.gov/lead-law.

Learn about the Vermont Lead- Safe RRPM license requirements at www.healthvermont.gov/RRPM

Learn more about lead hazards and how to prevent lead poisoning at healthvermont.gov/lead.

