

Lead frequently asked questions

Why was lead used in paint?

Lead is a metal that was used for many years in paint and other products. It was a cheap method to provide color retention and to provide paint longevity.



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Galena Lead Sulfide

Where else is lead found?

The following items may contain lead:

Old plumbing

Old crystal

Glazed pottery

Old car batteries

Soil and dust from deteriorating paint or from former leaded gasoline

Old painted toys and furniture

Lead smelters or other industry that may release lead into the air

Folk remedies such as “greta” and “azarcon”

Some imported candy

Paint on bridges

Costume jewelry

Old ceramic tiles

Garden hoses

Automotive batteries

This list does not include every product that may contain lead . It is intended as a general guide to indicate types of materials that may contain lead.

What are the health hazards related to lead exposure?

The primary health risks are related to the inhalation or ingestion of lead dust or paint chips.

Overexposure to lead can lead to damage of the nervous system.

Lead poisoning symptoms in children can be exhibited as damage to the brain, headaches, behavior and learning problems, slowed growth, and hearing problems.

Lead poisoning symptoms in adults can be exhibited as high blood pressure, hypertension, reproductive problems, nerve disorders, muscle and joint pain, and memory/concentration problems.

How is the lead paint managed at UD?

Buildings built prior to 1978 are more likely to have lead based paint.

Painted surfaces at the University are generally maintained in good condition. If an area requires extensive surface preparation prior to painting due to chipping, flaking, or deterioration, certified workers trained in lead-safe work practices are used for the work.

The workers conduct the work using control methods such as plastic sheeting to isolate and contain the work area and using hand methods or HEPA equipped tools to keep the lead dust to a minimum. After the plastic sheeting is removed, a cleaning step is employed such as wet wiping and HEPA vacuuming.

All lead paint chips are bagged prior to disposal off-site or at the UD MMF building.

All workers wear personal protective equipment such as respirators, tyvek suits, and gloves.

Who do I call if I have a lead related questions?

Contact the Environmental Health and Safety Department at 831-8475

What needs to be done prior to construction and renovation?

Sampling of painted building materials that will be demolished is conducted using an XRF instrument or by obtaining paint chips which are sent to a laboratory for analysis to determine if lead exists. Sampling is conducted by a certified lead inspector within the Environmental Health and Safety Department or by a certified environmental consultant.