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Homeowners Urged to Check New Lead Certification Requirements Before Starting Remodeling Projects

Homeowners considering repairs and renovations of pre-1978 housing are being urged to be aware of new federal rules requiring the use of safe-lead practices. Those rules, handed down by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) now require contractors performing those renovations to be certified and follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination. The federal government banned lead-based paint from housing in 1978, but most homes built before that time likely contain lead-base paint.

“Common renovation activities like sanding, cutting and demolition can create hazardous lead dust and chips by disturbing lead-based paint,” said Dale Shugars, Executive Vice President of the Home Builders Association of Greater Kalamazoo. “To protect against this risk, EPA issued rules requiring the use of lead-safe practices and other actions aimed at preventing lead poisoning.”

Under the new EPA rules, which became effective on April 22, 2010, anyone who provides construction trade services including, but not limited to, carpet/floor covering installation, carpentry, electrical, painting, plumbing, renovation and remodeling is required to have at least one person on the project who has completed eight hours of lead-safe certified training.

Projects excluded from the lead certification rules include housing built after 1978, housing for elderly or disabled persons, zero-bedroom dwellings, housing or components declared lead-free by a certified inspector. The rule does not apply to minor maintenance or repair activities affecting less than six square feet of lead-based paint in a room or less than 20 square feet of lead-based paint on the exterior. Window replacement is not minor maintenance or repair.

There are stiff fines of up to \$37,000 per job for failure to comply with the lead certification rules. Consumers are urged to verify the lead certification qualifications of any contractor they hire on a pre-1978 home project. EPA has a lead hotline at 1-800-424-LEAD which consumers can call to determine if their contractor is lead certified.

Anyone needing assistance finding certified renovators in their area should contact **the Home Builders Association of Greater Kalamazoo at (269) 375-4225.**

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ABOUT HBAGK: The Home Builders Association of Greater Kalamazoo is the professional association for members of the housing industry in Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties as well as the southern halves of Allegan and Barry Counties. Builder members consist of residential contractors, remodelers, and developers. Associate members represent all professions that support the home building industry. The HBAGK exists so that members of the residential construction industry can ethically and efficiently provide our communities with safe, quality, affordable housing and to promote home ownership. It is affiliated with the National Association of Home Builders and the Michigan Association of Home Builders.