Lead abatement overview

Lead abatement initiatives have been very effective at reducing hazards in residences built before the 1978 ban on lead-based paint in homes. Despite these efforts, exposure to lead in the home remains a problem in many older homes, with devastating impacts especially on young children.

Lead hazards in homes may be present in paint and in drinking water. Federal law requires that renters and homebuyers receive a disclosure form before they rent or buy a home built prior to 1978 to make sure they are aware of the risks of exposure to lead. For some types of federally-owned housing, the presence of a child with elevated blood lead levels trigger additional obligations, such as conducting an environmental investigation. The maximum acceptable blood level concentration is set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Because, in many instances, local governments do not have the authority to enforce federal or state standards directly, local steps to eliminate lead hazards may focus on incorporating federal and state requirements into local ordinances. Other measures include requiring testing of homes for the presence of lead, providing financial assistance to replace or enclose areas with lead paint, and educating renters and owners about the hazards of lead paint.