



## Lead in paint

### ● Why is lead in paint?

Lead is used to make paint last longer. The amount of lead in paint was reduced in 1950 and further reduced again in 1978. Houses built before 1950 are very likely to contain lead paint while houses built after 1950 will have less lead in the paint. House paint sold today has very low levels of lead. Lead-based paint is the most common source of lead poisoning in children.

### ● How much is too much?

The danger from lead paint depends on:

- The amount of lead in the painted surface
- The condition of the paint
- The amount of paint that gets into your child

Lead levels in paint are measured in parts per million (**ppm**). The greater the amount of lead in paint, the higher the ppm number. The federal government currently allows 600 ppm of lead in household paint. 5,000 ppm or over is a high amount of lead in paint. If paint is peeling or chipping, a child can easily eat it during normal play.

### ● How does the lead get from the paint into my child?

Over many years, painted surfaces crumble into household dust. This dust clings to toys, fingers and other objects that children normally put in their mouths. This is the most common way that lead gets into your child. Children also get lead into their bodies by chewing on lead painted surfaces. Some young children eat paint that is peeling or chipping.

### ● What do I do if my home has been painted with lead-based paint?

There are many dangers involved in removing lead paint from your home. Every member of your family can be poisoned if removal is done incorrectly. There are three ways to make the lead paint in your home less dangerous. The first two below are the safest ways to handle lead paint and they should be considered first.

#### **Replace it.**

Replacing a lead painted object means removing the object from the house and replacing it with a new, lead-free item. For example, a door may be removed by its hinges and replaced with a new, safe door. Do not burn any lead-painted item you remove from your home. Wrap the item in heavy plastic and keep it away from your children. This takes the lead out of your home and it does not create a lot of lead dust.

## **Cover it.**

It best to cover surfaces that cannot be replaced, such as walls or floors, with a long lasting, tough material like sheetrock, paneling or floor tiles. Because covering does not get the lead paint out of your home, walls or floors that are newly covered must be kept in good condition. **Repainting with new paint or hanging wallpaper is not a permanent method of covering lead paint. If the new paint or wallpaper peels, the lead paint will be exposed again.**

## **Remove it.**

*Sanding, burning or scraping lead paint is the most dangerous way of removing lead paint!* this makes large amounts of lead dust or fumes which can poison workers, household members, and pets.

## **WARNING: THERE ARE MANY PRECAUTIONS THAT NEED TO BE FOLLOWED BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

- Pregnant women, children, and family pets should not be present when this type of work is being done. Only those who are working should be in the home and the work area should be sealed off from the rest of the house with heavy plastic and tape.
- A special respirator should be worn by the people removing the paint to prevent lead dust from being inhaled. There are two precautions to follow before using a respirator:
  - have your respirator professionally fitted
  - use a respirator only with a doctor's advice
- Do not eat, drink , chew gum or smoke in the work area.
- Outdoor work should not be done on a windy day because the lead dust may poison workers and neighbors.
- Use a drop cloth to catch and contain any paint chips.
- Never sand, burn, scrape or use paint remover with methylene chloride on lead paint. All paint removers are hazardous. Follow the instructions printed on the label.
- Test the paint in any area you plan to remodel before you begin the work.  
(See below: Testing Your Paint for Lead.)

These are just a few of the precautions that need to be followed. If these and others are not followed, lead poisoning may occur. Before you begin this type of project, call your local health department to find out how to make this project as safe as possible.

## **● Testing your paint for lead**

Painted surfaces that your child has chewed, or woodwork in your child's room, are good areas to test. Woodwork, such as doors, windows or trim will often have high levels of lead in the paint. Any area that is peeling is also a good choice. Any room that you want to remodel should also be tested before the work is started.

Samples from different areas should be kept separate.

- Use a knife to scrape sections of paint, at least the size of a quarter, down to the bare wood or plaster. Do not take the wood or plaster with your sample or your paint results will not be accurate.
- Put the samples in clean, ordinary plastic bags. With a permanent marker, write where you got the sample from on the bag.

Send the samples to a lab certified by the California Department of Health Services. A list of certified labs is available from your local health department.





# Lead in Soil

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## Why is lead in soil?

Almost all of lead in soil comes from lead-based paint chips flaking from homes, factory pollution, and from the use of leaded gasoline. Over time, lead builds up in soil. Lead levels in soil are usually higher in cities, near roadways and industries that use lead, and next to homes where crumbling lead paint has fallen into the soil.

## How much is too much?

The danger of lead in soil depends on:

- The amount of lead in the soil around your house
- The amount of soil that gets into your child

The amount of lead in soil is measured in parts per million (ppm). The greater the amount of lead in soil, the higher the ppm number. Soil naturally has small amounts of lead in it, about 50 ppm. 200-500 ppm of lead is commonly found in city soil. 1,000 ppm is a high amount of lead in soil, and is defined as hazardous waste.

## How does lead get from the soil into my child?

Lead dirt clings to fingers, toys and other objects that children normally put in their mouths. This is the most common way that lead in soil gets into your child. Lead in soil does not pass through unbroken skin. If soil is covered with plants, rocks or other ground cover, children have less contact with the dirt and the lead in it. The more lead that is in your soil, the more harmful the soil can be to your children's health.

## Can I protect my child from lead in soil?

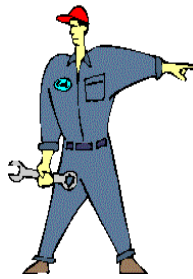
If the amount of lead in your soil is 200 ppm or over, and if the soil is not covered with many plants or thick ground cover, then you should consider one or more of the following suggestions to make your soil safer.

- Prevent nearby sources of lead from contaminating soil, for example, control peeling house paint. Call your local health department for appropriate methods.
- Plant and maintain grass or other thick ground cover.
- Cover the soil with a thick layer of gravel, wood chips, or other materials.
- Pave the area.
- If you have no other alternatives, remove the top 3 to 6 inches of soil and replace with uncontaminated soil.

***CAUTION: Soil with lead levels of 1,000 ppm or more is considered hazardous waste by the California***

*Department of Health Services. Before you move soil, call your local health department.*





## Don't take lead home from your job!

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### Can lead at work harm my child?

Yes. Your child can get lead poisoning if you or someone who lives in your home works with lead. Some kinds of work make lead dust or fumes. You cannot see lead dust, but it can get on your hands, face and clothes. You take lead dust from your job to your family when you wear your work clothes and shoes home. Lead dust can get in your car. It can get on furniture, floors and carpets. Your child can swallow this lead dust and be poisoned.

### What can lead poisoning do to my child?

Children who swallow lead dust may have problems learning and paying attention. Lead can harm the brain, nerves and kidneys. Lead is especially dangerous for children under the age of six.

**Most children with lead poisoning do not look or act sick. Ask your doctor to test your child's blood for lead. This is the only way to know if your child is being lead poisoned.**

### How do I know if I work with lead?

You may work with lead if you:

- Make or fix batteries
- Melt, cast, or grind lead, brass, or bronze
- Make or fix radiators
- Make or paint ceramics
- Remove old paint
- Tear down or remodel houses, buildings, tanks, or bridges
- Solder
- Work with scrap metal
- Work at a shooting range
- Assemble computers with lead solder

**There are many other jobs where lead can be dangerous.**

**Ask your employer if you work with lead.** The law says your employer must tell you about anything at work, which is dangerous. This includes lead.

Get the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for each product you use on the job. An MSDS is a form,

which lists the ingredients in a product. Your employer must give you the MSDS if you ask for it. **Look at "Section II" of the MSDS to see if the product contains lead.**

Ask to see the results of any tests that are done for lead in your work area. You are exposed to lead when you scrape, blast, sand, burn, weld, or cut on surfaces where there is lead paint. Your employer should test these surfaces before you work on them to see if they contain lead. You have a right to see the results of the test.

**Get a blood lead test.** Adults who are lead poisoned may feel tired, irritable, or get aches and pains. They also can have serious health problems without knowing it.

## How can I protect my family from lead poisoning?

- Change into clean clothes and shoes at work before you get into your car or go home. Put dirty work clothes and shoes in a plastic bag.
- Wash your face and hands with soap and warm water before leaving work.
- Take a shower and wash your hair as soon as you get home. (It is better to shower at work if you can.)
- Wash work clothes separately from all other clothes. Empty your work clothes from the plastic bag directly into the washing machine and wash them. Run the empty washing machine again to rinse out the lead.(It is better if your employer washes the work clothes.)
- The law says your employer must provide a place to wash your hands. In high exposure lead jobs, your employer must also provide work clothes and shower.

## Does my employer have to protect my health?

**Yes!** Your employer must follow special regulations to protect you from lead poisoning. Find out more about these regulations. Talk to your employer or your union representative, or call the Occupational Lead Program of the California Department of Health Services at **1-510-622-4332**.

## Where can I get help?

- **For your child:**  
Your child may be able to get a free lead test and health check-up through your health insurance or through the CHDP program. Call the CHDP program in your county for more information. Medi-Cal also covers lead tests.

Look for the telephone number in the front of your phone book in the Government Listings under "County Government Offices, Health Department, Child Health and Disability Prevention."

- **Information on lead at work**  
Occupational Lead Poisoning Prevention Program, California Department of Health Services  
Call (510) 540-2115 collect and ask for the Occupational Lead Program.

- **Complaints about lead at work**  
California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA)  
Talk to your employer if you think you have a lead problem at your job. If your employer does not fix the problem, you can call Cal/OSHA to make a complaint. Cal/OSHA will not tell your

employer who made the call.

Look for the telephone number in the front of your phone book in the Government Listings under "State Government Offices, Department of Industrial Relations, Division of Occupational safety Health."

- **Lead dust in your home**

If you think you have a problem with lead dust in your home, contact the Lead Program in your County Health Department.





## Lead in home remedies

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**CAUTION:** Home remedies and medicines can help cure sick people. However, some of these home remedies contain lead and will make you very sick.

### ***THESE HOME REMEDIES CONTAIN LEAD AND ARE VERY DANGEROUS!!***

- **Azarcon** a bright orange powder also known as Rueda, Coral, Maria Luisa, Alarcon, Liga
- **Greta** a yellow powder

Both Azarcon and Greta are given for "empacho" (intestinal illness).

Both Azarcon and Greta are almost 100% lead.

Any amount is poisonous to children and adults.

### **Why is lead dangerous?**

Lead poisoning can cause damage to the kidneys, nervous system, and brain. Children have suffered permanent brain damage and even died from the use of Azarcon and Greta.

Children with lead poisoning usually do not look or act sick. When they do show signs of lead poisoning, their symptoms can be very much like empacho. The symptoms of lead poisoning include tiredness, sleeplessness, stomach ache and vomiting.

### **What can I do if I've taken or have given my child a home remedy that contains lead?**

You should get medical attention immediately. Call your doctor, clinic or local health department for more information or for help with treatment for lead poisoning. Ask your health department to arrange for a free test to determine if there is lead in your Azarcon or Greta. Medical information is confidential. Your health is the main concern.

You can also call the Poison Control telephone hotline in your area. Look for their number in the front of the white pages in your phone book. Someone is available 24 hours/day to answer your questions and help in an emergency.

**DANGER!! THESE HOME REMEDIES ALSO CONTAIN LEAD AND CAN MAKE YOU VERY SICK**

### **Hmong community:**

- **Pay-loo-ah** a red powder given for rash or fever

### **Asian Indian community:**

- **Ghasard** a brown powder given as an aid to digestion

- **Bala Goli** a round bean dissolved in "gripe water" and used for stomach aches
- **Kandu** a red powder used to treat stomach ache

**Arab American community:**

- **Kohl (Alkohol)** a powder used both as a cosmetic eye make-up and applied to skin infections and the navel of a newborn child





## Lead in Imported Ceramics

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### ● What should I look for?

Lead may be in the paint or glaze of a ceramic dish. Two warning signs that lead is present are:

#### 1. Color

Colorful ceramics painted red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, or black may contain lead. Dark blue pieces do not have lead.

#### 2. Rough or raised surface

Ceramic dishes that contain lead often feel rough and chalky or have raised surfaces, but even dishes with smooth and shiny surfaces may have lead.

### ● What can I do to prevent lead poisoning?

The only way to be certain that your dishes do not contain lead is to test them. Many hardware stores and some pharmacies sell lead-testing kits.

**Do not use any ceramic tableware that you know contains lead on the inside or outside.** This is the *best* way to prevent lead poisoning from this source. Inexpensive alternative include dishes made of plastic, or lead-free ceramics. Many of these safe dishes come in patterns and colors similar to dishes containing lead.

### ● What other tips are there for preventing lead poisoning?

**1. Do not store food or drinks in dishes that may have lead.** Over time, lead can pass from tableware into food.

**2. Do not serve acidic or hot food in dishes that may have lead.** Acidic foods like lemons and salsa and hot drinks like coffee, while not dangerous themselves, can pass lead into food.

**3. Do not use heat or microwave food in dishes that may contain lead.** Heat can cause lead to pass from a dish into food.

## ● What is Proposition 65 and the yellow triangle about?

There are two laws which set standards for how much lead is allowed to be in dishes. One is federal, set by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The other is for California, and was set by the California voters in Proposition 65. The California law is much stricter. Dishes that meet the FDA standards, but not California's, should be marked with a yellow triangle. However, not all manufacturers use the yellow triangle. You can ask the salesperson if the pattern you want meets the Proposition 65 standards.





# Simple things that you can do to prevent childhood lead poisoning

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## **Keep your home as clean and free from dust as possible**

The best way to clean up lead dust is to regularly wet mop your floors, wipe window ledges, and wash all surfaces with water and household detergent.

## **Take off your shoes before entering the house**

Or make sure they are wiped well on a doormat outside the house. This will help prevent lead dust and soil from getting into the house.

## **Change out of work clothes**

And take a shower before coming home if you work with lead at your job. Lead dust brought home on the clothes of workers can spread in the house and poison children.

Lead is used in many workplaces such as radiator repair shops, battery manufacturing plants and lead smelters.

## **Never sand, burn or scrape paint**

Unless you know that it does not contain lead.

## **Test painted surfaces for lead**

In any area that you plan to remodel, before you begin the work. If lead is in the paint, learn how to handle the paint safely. If the work is not done the right way, lead dust can scatter and poison your family, pets, neighbors and workers.

## **Encourage healthy eating habits**

Eating regular and healthy meals may make it harder for lead to hurt your child. Meals should include fruits and vegetables as well as calcium-rich foods (milk, cheese, yogurt, corn tortillas, tofu or bean curd) and iron-rich foods (meat, chicken, iron-fortified cereals, raisins, and dried fruit).

## **Wash children's hands often,**

Especially before eating.

## **Do not use older, imported or handmade dishes**

For serving, preparing or storing food or drink unless you know that they do not contain lead. (For more information on testing for lead in dishes, call your local health department.)

## **Avoid hobbies that use lead**

Hobbies that use lead include soldering, or making stained glass, bullets, or fishing sinkers.

## **Keep furniture away from damaged paint**

Do not place cribs, playpens, beds or high chairs next to areas where paint is chipping or peeling, or can be chewed.

## **Do not use home remedies or cosmetics that contain lead**

Like Azarcon, Greta, Pay-loo-ah, and Alkohol or Kohl. These remedies often contain a lot of lead and can make children very sick.





# Food Tips to help protect your child from lead poisoning For ages 1 to 6 years

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It's harder for lead to get into the blood when your child eats:

- **Regular meals and snacks**
- **Foods high in calcium**
- **Foods high in iron**

## HEALTHY EATING CAN HELP PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM LEAD POISONING

Serve your child food at regular times during the day.

### Sample Menu

#### *Breakfast*

milk, dry cereal, orange juice

#### *Snack*

whole wheat crackers, applesauce

#### *Lunch*

tuna sandwich, banana, carrot sticks, milk

#### *Snack*

graham crackers, yogurt

#### *Dinner*

lean hamburger patty, noodles, broccoli, bread, milk

Remember: younger children need smaller servings.

Serve plenty of these foods.

**Foods high in calcium** for strong bones and teeth: milk, cheese, yogurt, broccoli, tofu, corn tortillas, sardines, dark green leafy vegetables

**Foods High in Iron** for strong blood: lean meats, chicken, dried beans, cereal with iron, dark green leafy vegetables, dried fruit

**Give your child these foods every day:**

5 Fruits & Vegetables or more servings

7 Breads, Cereals & Grains or more servings

2 Milk Products or more servings daily total: 16 oz. (whole milk until age 2)

2 Protein Foods daily total: 3-4 oz.

To help your child have a healthy weight, serve high fat foods less often such as, fried foods, fries, chips, ice cream, candy, snack crackers.

**Eating less fat may help protect your child from lead poisoning, too.**

*The information for this page was obtained from the brochure developed by the Nutrition Subcommittee of the CHILD HEALTH & DISABILITY PREVENTION (CHDP) PROGRAM.*



# Blood Lead Levels - What do they mean?

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The blood test gives an idea of how much lead your child has been exposed to over the last month or so. The meaning of the blood lead test results are explained below.

## **Below 10µg/dL (micrograms per deciliter)**

**This is a normal blood lead level.** If you live in an older home with peeling paint your child(ren) under age 6 may need to be tested again within the next year.

## **10-14 µg/dL**

**This level is slightly above the level that is considered normal.**

- Your child may need to be tested again in 3-6 months. Talk with your doctor
- Look for lead hazards around your home - we'll send you information that will help you

## **15-19 µg/dL**

**This level means your child has a mild exposure to lead.**

- Your child needs another blood test in 3 months. Talk to your doctor
- We will provide information and a home visit to help you look for hazards around your home
- If your child has a second blood lead test result in this range, we will test your home for lead

## **20-44 µg/dL**

This level means your child has a moderate to high exposure to lead.

- Immediately make a medical appointment for a confirming blood lead test and lead poisoning check-up
- Lead hazards must be found and reduced. We will provide information and test your home for lead
- Follow your doctor's recommendations for retesting and keep all medical appointments

## **Above 45 µg/dL**

-Lead poisoning at this level is serious

-Your child needs a full medical check-up and treatment **NOW!**

-Your child may need to be in the hospital for specialized treatment. -Your doctor will advise you.

-Lead hazards must be found and removed. Your child needs a lead safe home to get well. The Lead Program will test your home and provide recommendations for decreasing exposure

-Follow your doctor's recommendations for retesting and keep all medical appointments

## **A blood lead level over 70 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ requires immediate medical attention!**

The most common source of lead poisoning in children is dust that comes from peeling paint in older homes. You can help prevent lead poisoning by washing children's hands often, wet cleaning floors and window sills every week, and feeding children good meals with lots of iron and calcium.



# Your Legal Rights To Lead Safe Housing

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*Lead poisoning is harmful to children. Children often get lead poisoning from lead-based paint in older homes. There are laws to protect your family from lead and this fact sheet is to help you understand your legal rights.*

## You Have the Right To know if Lead is in Your Home

If your house was built before 1978 and your lease is longer than 100 days, the Landlord or Seller must warn you if there is lead in your home. When you moved into your home, you should have been given an educational booklet.

## You Have the Right to a Lead-Safe Home

You do have a right to a "lead-safe" home and several laws can protect you. California law says something that is bad for your health is called a "nuisance." Because lead is unhealthy to your family, a court may decide that lead is a "nuisance."

Not fixing a nuisance is against the law. Another California law says your rented home is under a warranty or promise to be safe to live in. This is called an "implied warranty of habitability," and means that the house must be fit for humans to live in. Since lead is not safe, this law can protect you.

## Can My Landlord Evict Me or Make Me Move?

Your Landlord has no right to evict you or raise your rent because you complained about lead, but he can legally evict you for other reasons. It is important to follow the rules that you and your Landlord have agreed to (for example, whether pets are allowed). It is also smart to keep written records of when you paid the rent and when you told your Landlord about the lead. ***Always make requests and complaints in writing.***

If you believe you are being evicted or asked to move because you complained about lead, save your records and contact a lawyer. You will have to prove that your rent is paid in full, that you did not break any promises with your Landlord, and that you used your rights to complain about lead within six months of being evicted. A judge will decide if you were wrongfully evicted.

## How Do I know If There Is Lead In My Home Or Soil?

Lead-based paint is the main source of lead poisoning. Other sources are pottery, home remedies and cosmetics.

If you live in a home built before 1978, lead-based paint may have been used. If you live near highways and busy intersections, your dirt may contain lead too. These areas contain lead from past use of leaded gas. Testing your home and the soil for lead is expensive, so the first step is to have your child tested.

## How Do I Know If My Child Has Lead Poisoning?

A child with lead poisoning may not look or act sick, but lead is very harmful.

Lead can cause behavioral problems and nerve damage. The only way to know for sure if your child has lead poisoning is to have your child get a blood lead test. If you are eligible for Medi-Cal, your child should be tested for lead.

This is a simple blood test for children between 6 months and 6 years of age. If your child is less than 6 years old and has never been tested, ask your doctor for the test at your next visit.

Even if you are undocumented or not eligible for Medi-Cal, other *free or low-cost* services may be available for Santa Clara County residents through **Healthy Kids or Healthy Families (1-888-244-5222)** or the **Child Health & Disability Prevention (CHDP) Program (408-793-2001)**. If you have your own medical insurance, blood lead tests are covered. Ask Your Doctor.

## There Is So Much Information, What Can I Do?

There is a lot to know about lead, but don't feel lost by all the information. Take it a step at a time. Start by getting your child tested. In the meantime, there are some simple things you can do to reduce the risk of lead poisoning:

*~Wash your child's hands and your own before meals.*

*~Wash floors and walls regularly with water and a household cleaner.*

*~Eat healthy foods high in calcium and iron.*

*~Have your family remove their shoes before entering your home.*

*~Plant ground cover such as clover or grass or cover open dirt areas with woodchips, gravel, or 3-6 inches of clean soil.*

## What Can I Do If My Child Has Lead Poisoning?

Don't panic. Community help is available. If you believe lead is in your home and your child is not safe, you may wish to take the following steps:

### Get Smart

Free information is available at the **Santa Clara County Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program**. Call **408-793-6440** for lead poisoning prevention advice, referrals to health care services, and lead-safe remodeling tips. This program is committed to protecting the health of children in our community.

### **Talk to your Landlord**

Ask your Landlord to safely remove the lead-based paint or to make the paint safer. Put your request for repairs in writing. Making the paint safer requires taking careful steps.

Call **1-800-424-LEAD** and get a copy of the EPA pamphlet called "**Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home**", which will give you and your landlord tips on how to clean up the lead-based paint.

### **What If My Landlord Won't Fix The Lead Problem?**

Landlords don't have to fix all problems, but they should fix any problem that makes your home unsafe, or below "standard".

If you need more help:

#### **Call the Housing Department**

The **San Jose City Housing Department** may be able to help your landlord with repairs. Low interest loans and grants are available for eligible homeowners. Encourage your landlord to call **(408) 277-4747**, to find out more about these programs.

#### **See a Lawyer**

You may have to contact a lawyer to help you. A lawyer can get a court order to "enjoin" or force the Landlord to fix the "nuisance" or the "habitability defects." When you see a lawyer, bring all papers, letters, receipts, and this brochure.

You may be eligible for free or low-cost legal services at:

**Bay Area Legal Aid (408-283-3700)**

**Legal Aid Society of Santa Clara County (408-283-1535).**

You may also wish to call the **Environmental Protection Unit of the District Attorney's Office (408-299-TIPS)** for help.

If you live in the California Bay Area, more help is just a phone call away....

#### **To learn more about lead poisoning**

· Childhood Lead Program

(408) 793-6444

· National Lead Clearinghouse

1-800-424-LEAD (English / Spanish)

#### **Medical testing**

· CHDP (408) 793-2001

- Healthy Families 1-800-880-5305

### **Legal Services**

- Bay Area Legal Aid (408) 283-3700
- Legal Aid Society of Santa Clara County (408) 283-1535
- District Attorney - Environmental Protection Unit (408) 299-TIPS (8477)

### **Public Agency**

- City of San Jose Housing Department (408) 277-4747

The information used for this webpage was obtained from the brochure "**Your Legal Rights To Lead Safe Housing**", which was created by law students at Santa Clara University School of Law and developed in cooperation with the Santa Clara County Childhood Lead Program.

**Disclaimer:** This webpage is informational. It is not legal advice because the law can be interpreted differently in each case. This webpage was carefully prepared, but we assume no responsibility for errors and we are not liable for any damages resulting from the use of it.