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## Contractors gear up for new rules on lead

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With nearly 38 million homes in the U.S. that still contain lead-based paint, the Environmental Protection Agency has issued rules on remodeling older homes to reduce contact with the deadly chemical.

Next month, the EPA will implement new work practice standards for remodelers of older homes in an effort to reduce lead paint exposure, especially among children.

"The rules for containing the work area and containing the dust that results from the work being done, are a lot more strict now and a lot more clear than they've ever been," said Scott Burt of Topcoat Finishes, a local painting contractor.

The new standards will extend to builders, painters, plumbers, and electricians working in all rental housing built before 1978, as well as in older non-rental homes inhabited by children under age six or pregnant women.

"In our area, that's a lot of houses. You can't throw a dart around Chittenden county without hitting one of those houses," Burt said.

The regulations apply to any renovation, repair, or painting contract involving the disturbance of more than six square feet of lead paint in an interior room or 20 square feet of lead paint on an exterior wall. Some consumers in our area feel the new rules make renovating safer for everyone. "You're running the risk of putting someone at harm. If you have kids running around, and for some reason, they ingest any of it, you're in trouble," said Lynsey Provost, a home renovator in Hinesburg.

Under the regulations, contractors will be required to post warning signs, restrict occupants from jobsites, contain work areas to prevent the spread of dust and debris, and conduct a thorough clean up.

Scott Burt recently completed the mandatory training and certification class in accordance with the new lead-safe work practices. "I think it is safe to expect that the costs of working on pre-1978 homes would be higher in order to have the work done in a compliant way," he said.

And some locals argue, they are willing to take that chance in the name of safety. "It may raise the costs a little bit, but me personally, I'd rather have better sleep at night knowing that its safe," Provost said.

Allowing for better homes and better breathing.

[Melinda Davenport](#) - WCAX News