

What Owners of Pre-1978 Homes Need to Know About Lead Based Paint

At a recent office meeting, an expert on lead based paint educated my associates and me about lead based paint hazards and mitigation.

The use of lead-based paint was banned starting in 1978. Since it is now almost 37 years later, it's likely that your pre-1978 home's lead based paint is covered by other paints, right?

Yes, but there is still the possibility of exposure to lead when you do any kind of renovation, and serious rules and severe penalties for violating them have been instituted relating to the renovation of pre-1978 homes.

For example, if you want to replace your windows, you'll have to hire a company which is EPA certified for the task because the process entails disturbing the otherwise hidden original

paint when you remove the framing around the windows.

The contractor for that or any other renovation must provide you with a pamphlet about lead based paint hazards, get a signed receipt from you, do testing for lead based paint and, if detected, must follow certain protocols for doing the work in a way that prevents lead based paint dust from becoming airborne. Failure to follow *each* of those steps can subject the contractor to a separate 5-figure fine, which can add up to a total fine of around \$200,000!

Lead can also be found in many ceramic tiles and coatings on bathtubs, as well as in the adhesives and caulks beneath them. Merely breaking apart a tub for removal can cause lead paint dust to become airborne. If you use a torch to remove old paint

and the bottom layer has lead in it, you will vaporize lead and breath it into your lungs.

As a homeowner, you are allowed to do your own work without precautions, but if you hire anyone — either a contractor or a handyman — to renovate as little as 6 sq. ft. of your pre-1978 home, that contractor or handyman has to follow EPA rules or be subject to those severe penalties. Putting a dumpster in front of your pre-1978 home could well attract an official visit to see whether you have a contractor or handyman who has followed proper procedures.

The Realtor who sold you that pre-1978 home is not at risk so long as he signed the required lead based paint disclosure submitted at the time of the contract to buy your home. And you're not at risk yourself — financially. However, your contractor or handyman *can* be severely at risk to the point of bankruptcy. More importantly, lead poisoning from dust or

vapor is a real hazard that arises with any disturbance of hidden lead based paint. If you're around, the health of you and especially your children could be a risk.

The most common symptom of lead poisoning in children resembles ADHD. If your child has ADHD symptoms, you might consider getting the blood test for lead levels.

Doing lead based paint testing is not expensive. The person who taught us about lead based paint charges as little as \$100 to use a special tool that can detect lead in your home. This gun-like device contains a radio isotope that can detect the minutest level of lead even if it is buried under multiple layers of paint. He is **Michael McCarty** and he can be reached at 303-883-6915.

My associates and I are now better prepared to advise clients who are buying homes built before 1978 and will certainly recommend hiring Michael to do lead testing.

REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH**,
Realtor®

Jeffco Voters Should Consider the School Board Chaos When Voting

No, the Jeffco School Board members are not on this year's ballot which you received in the mail this week. However, the root cause of the school board's chaos is shared by Jeffco's Board of County Commissioners, one of whom *is* on this year's ballot.

There are five members of the school board, each one theoretically representing one-fifth of the county but all elected by the entire county. Three of those seats were up for election last year and there were three conservatives running as a bloc against three non-conservatives. It was inevitable that either all three conservatives or all three non-conservatives would win, then constituting a majority of the 5-seat board.

If each seat were elected by its theoretical constituents from one-fifth of the county, it is unlikely that all three conservatives or all three non-conservatives would have been elected, and the board would not be as dysfunctional as it is now.

The same dynamic is at work on the Board of County Commissioners. The incumbent on this year's ballot, Dan Rosier, is opposed to changing to the election of commissioners by district. It's a good reason to vote for his opponent, John Flerlage, who supports that change.

This Week's Featured New Listing

5-Bedroom Centennial Home on 1/3 Acre Lot

This 2-story, 5-bedroom home at 6557 S. Franklin Street in the Broadway Estates section of Centennial features nearly 3,000 finished square feet, a 2-car attached garage, and a spacious fenced yard with mature trees and a covered patio. The local elementary school is just 2 blocks away. The home has extensive hardwood flooring on the main floor and in all four upstairs bedrooms. The partial basement is finished with a 5th bedroom (non-conforming) and a second family room, plus lots of indoor storage. The home has hot water baseboard heat, even in the basement.



Two storage sheds are included. Listed by Chuck Brown. Open this Saturday & Sunday, 2-5 pm.



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