# Looking For Lead Hazards

Lead Tipsheet #6

July 2012

Homes built before 1950 most likely contain lead paint. Homes built between 1950 and 1978 may contain lead paint. Looking for lead in your home, or in rental units that you own, will help you identify potential lead hazards. Once you know what to look for you can help protect your family or tenants from lead exposure.

## Where to Look

Lead paint is found mostly on:

- windows and doors
- woodwork and trim
- floors and stairs
- exteriors, including porches
- walls in bathrooms and kitchens

Lead paint is **not** usually found on walls in rooms outside kitchens and bathrooms. It is **not** usually found on ceilings unless they are made of tin or wood. Some porch ceilings may be made of wood. Varnishes **don't** usually contain high amounts of lead.

Just because there is lead paint in a home does not mean that it is a hazard. Generally, lead paint in good condition is not considered a lead hazard. Paint that is chipping, peeling, flaking or covered with a residue of dust may be a lead hazard and needs to be addressed.

## How Often to Look

The condition of paint changes over time. Look for lead hazards every 6 months, and in between tenants if you own rental properties.

## What to Look For

Walk around inside and outside. Ask these questions:

1. Are there places where paint is chipping, peeling, flaking or chalking? If you wipe your hand across the surface, will it leave a residue of dust and/or chips of paint on your hand?

2. Is there paint on places where two surfaces rub or hit each other? Windows, doors, floors and stairs are examples.

3. Is there paint on surfaces where children may put their mouths? Examples include:
   - window sills, chair rails, baseboards and other places where dust could settle
   - surfaces that stick out half an inch or more or that are within a child's reach (4 feet or under)

4. Is there bare soil on the property? Dust and chips can fall from lead paint on the outside of a home and land in soil nearby. It can stay in soil for many years.

If the answer is "yes" to any of these questions it may be a lead hazard. You can find ways to fix possible hazards at www.maine.gov/healthyhomes.

**Protect your family.**

- Check this website: maine.gov/healthyhomes
- Call for advice: **866-292-3474 • TTY: Call Maine Relay 711**

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