

Choosing the Right Service: A Lead-Based Paint Inspection or Risk Assessment

DEQ realizes that choosing the lead-based paint (LBP) service that is most appropriate for your situation, as well as choosing the right LBP professional to work in your home, are very important decisions. According to EPA and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, as many as 23 million homes nationwide contain LBP. That translates into approximately three-quarters of the nation's housing built before 1978.

If LBP is present in a home and is allowed to deteriorate, the health of the occupants can be threatened. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that even though lead poisoning is preventable, 450,000 children have elevated blood lead levels. Lead dust can be ingested by hand-to-mouth activities. Children under six years of age are particularly susceptible. Once absorbed into the body, even low levels of lead exposure may cause learning disabilities, IQ deficits, decreased growth, hyperactivity, impaired hearing, behavioral problems and brain damage. Adults also suffer from many documented negative health effects from exposure to lead.

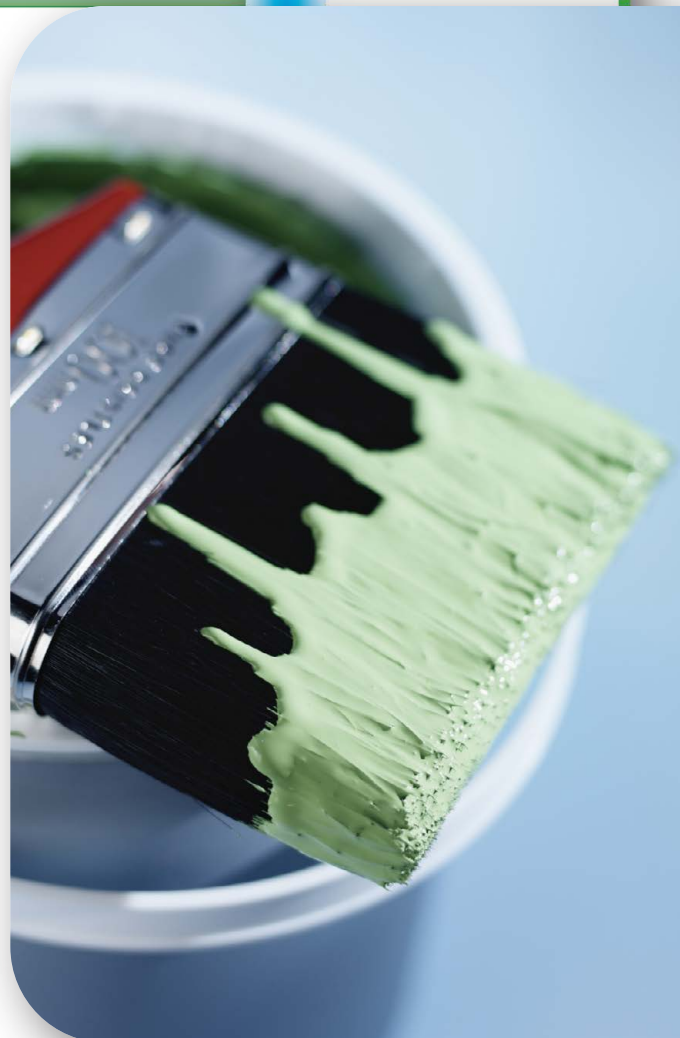
LBP poses little risk if it is identified and then properly managed and maintained. Identification of deteriorating LBP and its potential hazards can be accomplished through two types of evaluations: Inspection or Risk Assessment.

An LBP Inspection determines if lead is present in paint, at what concentration and where the leaded paint is located.

An LBP Risk Assessment identifies the presence or absence of LBP hazards, their source and severity, and recommends options to control those hazards.

Oklahoma state law requires LBP Inspectors and Risk Assessors to be certified by DEQ prior to performing Inspections or Risk Assessments.

Hiring a certified LBP Inspector or Risk Assessor to conduct these evaluations can provide valuable information about LBP to allow the owner or potential buyer to make an informed decision. The property owner or potential buyer should choose the type of evaluation that is most beneficial to them, which will depend upon his or her unique needs. The following are helpful summaries that may aid in making this decision.



Lead-Based Paint Inspection or Risk Assessment



LBP Inspection

An Inspection is typically conducted when one simply wants to determine where LBP is located. An LBP Inspection is beneficial prior to:

- Remodeling, renovation, or repainting
- Weatherization
- Sale of property/turnover
- Abatement of lead-based paint

The Inspector:

- Measures concentrations of lead in paint through a surface-by-surface investigation
- Determines exact locations of LBP
- Does not determine whether paint presents an immediate hazard
- Does not offer any guidance on lead hazard control
- Does not take dust or soil samples (except in cases of clearance inspections)

LBP Risk Assessment

A Risk Assessment is typically conducted when one wants to determine if any potential hazards exist from the presence of LBP. An LBP Risk Assessment is beneficial in the following cases:

- Interim controls
- Insurance (documentation of lead-safe status)
- Sale of property/turnover

The Risk Assessor may perform all Inspector duties in addition to the following:

- Focus on deteriorated LBP
- Identify LBP hazards
- Consider resident and owner use patterns
- Consider management and maintenance practices that will affect the paint
- Identify the existence, nature, severity, source and location of hazards
- Present options to control hazards
- May take dust and soil samples

The combination of an Inspection followed by a Risk Assessment, all conducted by one Risk Assessor (who is authorized to perform both jobs), will likely reduce the time spent on evaluations and offer more comprehensive advice. If the home is in good condition and likely does not contain LBP, a limited type of Risk Assessment called a “Lead Hazard Screen” may be more economical. During a Lead Hazard Screen, the Risk Assessor conducts less sampling but uses more sensitive criteria for hazard identification. If any lead hazards are present, a full LBP Risk Assessment should be performed.

Whether an Inspection or Risk Assessment is chosen, be careful to hire only those Inspectors or Risk Assessors that are DEQ-certified. DEQ certification ensures that the professional has been trained and has successfully completed an exam regarding proper procedures for Inspections and/or Risk Assessments. A list of Certified LBP Inspectors and Risk Assessors may be obtained from DEQ.

For further assistance, you may contact the Air Quality Division’s Technical Resources and Projects Section at (405) 702-4100, or write to them at 707 N. Robinson, P.O. Box 1677, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-1677.