

LOW-INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

Information Memorandum

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TO: LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIHEAP) GRANTEEES AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: Lead Paint Hazard Control and Weatherization

RELATED REFERENCES: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act, Title XXVI of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, Public Law 97-35, as amended.

PURPOSE: To advise grantees of ways to coordinate and safely carry out weatherization activities in homes with lead paint hazards.

BACKGROUND: Homes built before 1978 often contain lead-based paint. Medical studies have shown that lead is toxic, especially to young children, and can cause harm to the brain, kidneys, bone marrow and other body systems. At high levels, lead can cause coma, convulsions, and death. Comparatively low levels are also harmful, and can cause reduced intelligence, behavior difficulties, fetal development abnormalities, and other problems.

The effects of lead are so serious that several Federal agencies are working together to address the problem. These agencies include HHS, HUD, DOE, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Justice.

CONTENT: Major sources of lead in the home are paint used on walls and woodwork. For example, when the sash of a double-hung window is moved up and down to open and close the window, significant amounts of lead dust can be released into the air.

When some weatherization work is done on a home, it can have the effect of increasing the airborne lead, thus leading to increased medical problems for the residents of the home and for the workers (and for the worker's families, when lead dust is carried in on work clothes and shoes). For example, when walls with lead paint are disturbed in the process of adding insulation, lead dust can result.

LIHEAP grantees may spend up to 15% of their available funds on weatherization activities (up to 25% with a waiver from HHS). LIHEAP grantees that spend funds on weatherization often transfer the funds to the State agency that administers the Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program for Low Income Persons (WAP), and use the WAP rules for the LIHEAP weatherization funds. Such LIHEAP grantees should be aware of new WAP guidance in the area of lead-based paint.

WAP has recently issued guidance to their grantees that requires them to train workers and incorporate certain practices in doing weatherization work in low-income homes when lead-based painted surfaces are disturbed. The Department's strategy is to accomplish the weatherization of their client's homes so that no harm comes to the clients, their workers, or the worker's families from weatherization activities involving lead paint. While WAP funds cannot specifically be used for lead-based paint hazard reduction services, it is DOE policy that WAP workers be made aware of lead-based paint hazards and be trained in lead-based paint safe work practices. DOE is taking a proactive approach to dealing with hazards associated with disturbing lead-based paint during the weatherization process.

WAP's annual guidance to grantees for FY 2001 requires States to add a Lead Paint Hazard Control section to their Health and Safety Plans in their grant application. States must describe how they will implement lead-based paint safe work practices in their weatherization programs, including:

- 1) a description of the lead paint safe work practices to be followed by weatherization crews;
- 2) the timetable for completing any necessary lead paint training for local agency weatherization crews;
- 3) the proper disposal of all materials containing lead paint; and
- 4) the description of a "walk away" policy from dwellings where LIWAP funds or crew training are insufficient to do the tasks in a lead paint safe work manner.

A newly reconstituted WAP Health and Safety Committee adopted as a model on an interim measure, the set of protocols for doing lead paint safe work that the State of California uses in its weatherization program. A copy of these protocols have been distributed to the State WAP offices, and is attached for your information.

LIHEAP grantees may wish to adopt the DOE WAP lead paint guidance for any LIHEAP funds spent on weatherization. These guidelines allow the use of funds to train weatherization workers in lead paint safe work practices and the purchase of equipment (such as HEPA vacuums) which is necessary to do weatherization work in a lead paint safe manner.

In addition, while LIHEAP funds may not be used to carry out lead hazard control measures by themselves, there may be activities which meet the goals of both weatherization and lead paint hazard control. An example might be repair or replacement of windows that have lead paint.

ATTACHMENTS: Lead-Safe Weatherization - California lead paint safe work practices guidelines
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