

FOCUS

NPCA and the Paint Industry Continue to Redress Childhood Lead Poisoning through “The Next Generation” Program



The continuing reduction in environmental lead exposure in the United States is an American public health success story, the result of diligent efforts on the part of many actors in government, community advocates, and commercial partners in controlling lead exposure to safe levels over the past generation for the vast majority. But lead exposure resulting in childhood lead poisoning remains a health priority across the country, with a united national goal seeking to eliminate the problem by 2010.

Concern about lead in the environment is not new to the U.S. paint and coatings industry, which voluntarily reduced its use of lead pigments in consumer paints over 50 years ago, helped by a national consensus standard developed and endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. This standard became the baseline for the federal law that led to the effective ban of lead added to consumer paints in 1978 — a law actively supported by the paint industry. Like many other industries that used lead in their products, the paint industry found substitutes that were safe and effective. Why, then, are there continued legitimate public concerns?

The answer can be found by understanding the complex sources and pathways of environmental lead exposure. A frequently cited source of lead exposure is old, deteriorated lead-based paint in housing. Lead-based paint is widely acknowledged as not presenting a hazard when intact and left

undisturbed. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and some states have established lead-safe work practices to be followed during renovation and remodeling activities. Failure to do so can generate significant amounts of lead dust that is dangerous to young children. Other sources include lead contamination from old automobile exhaust deposits in soil; industrial lead soil deposits; lead in drinking water; homeopathic remedies among certain communities; and even new sources of lead contamination in imported products.

There is good news though. The Foundation for Child Development’s 2008 Special Focus Report, “Trends in Infancy/Early Childhood and Middle Childhood Well-Being, 1994-2006,” out of Duke University demonstrates an 84 percent decline in blood lead poisoning between 1997 and 2006 — from 7.61 to 1.21— in children ages 0 to 6 with elevated blood lead levels. This is an extremely important fact, because it has →

“THIS ISSUE BACKGROUNDER EXPLORES NPCA’S LEADERSHIP IN REDRESSING CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING, AS WELL AS ITS PREVENTION EFFORTS, AND SPECIFICALLY FOCUSES ON THE SUCCESS, TO DATE, OF ITS LEAD-SAFE TRAINING PROGRAM ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS ITS LATEST ENDEAVOR: NATIONAL LEAD SAFE TRAINING, ‘THE NEXT GENERATION.’ ”

○ The Foundation for NPCA’s Public Education and Outreach Program on Lead-based Paint

○ “The Next Generation”

○ Looking Ahead

been accomplished even while debate continues over the threshold of lead toxicity and the need for new "action" levels for the presence of lead in a child's blood. While related health indicators across the country show continued good news, with the trend being a dramatic decline in the prevalence of children with elevated blood lead levels, the percentage of children with elevated blood lead levels remains sufficiently high to warrant continued and careful attention and persistent application of the preventative approaches that have brought about the current success story.



Vigilance with respect to lead exposure cannot be relaxed and often requires new perspectives, as highly publicized incidents in 2007 of the presence of lead in toys imported

from China make clear. Lead dust, not only from the chipping of old, lead-based paint, but also from the improper "dry" scraping of intact, old, lead-based paint in the renovation of dwellings, and other unsafe work practices, remains a potential hazard to children. For its part, the National Paint and Coatings Association (NPCA) and its members firmly support the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Healthy People 2010 national goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning. NPCA believes that it is a public health problem that can be fully addressed with the right attention, dedication of resources, and cooperation by public agencies and supportive private industry. The U.S. paint industry has considerable experience in formulating products without the use of lead compounds, something yet to be embraced universally by foreign manufacturers, and stands ready to reliably supply safe, lead-free, conforming coatings to meet emerging product safety standards. And, to address the problem of childhood lead exposure from old, deteriorated paint in housing, NPCA and its members have a long history of cooperative and collaborative efforts (*read more about this on the back cover*), including its latest program, "The Next Generation."

This *Issue Backgrounder* explores NPCA's leadership in redressing childhood lead poisoning, as well as its prevention efforts, and specifically focuses on the success, to date, of its lead-safe training program activities, as well as its latest endeavor: National Lead Safe Training, "The Next Generation."

THE FOUNDATION FOR NPCA'S PUBLIC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAM ON LEAD-BASED PAINT

On May 12, 2003, NPCA announced a four-year agreement with the nation's State Attorneys General that established a national program of consumer paint product warnings, point-of-sale information and education, and free training to avoid potential exposure to lead-dust during the remodeling or renovation of buildings that may contain old, lead-based paint. The progressive Lead Exposure Warnings and Education and Training Programs Agreement between some 50 State Attorneys General and NPCA is emblematic of the U.S. paint industry's longstanding commitment to constructively address the problem of childhood lead poisoning.

Sept. 30, 2007 marked the end of the fourth year of activities under the agreement between the State Attorneys General and NPCA, and its accomplishments are astounding. Here are the facts and figures:

- ✓ Over 600 million gallons of consumer paints are now reported to be labeled with the agreement's specified surface preparation warning language, including the EPA Lead Information Hotline.
- ✓ Almost 5 million EPA brochures on lead safety for consumers, printed in English and Spanish, were distributed initially, and on a continuing basis, for counter display and distribution at tens of thousands of paint outlets throughout the United States.
- ✓ And, in the most progressive area of the agreement, for those four years, NPCA and industry sponsored and underwrote a National Lead-Safe Work Practices Training Program, in both English and Spanish. This program trained some 15,500 contractors, code officials, facility managers, landlords, homeowners, and children's health advocates on lead-safe work practices using a HUD/EPA-approved protocol at 640 tuition-free courses in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., with over 85 percent receiving course certification following a proficiency test.

With all the success and outreach, NPCA and industry are not resting on their laurels or satisfied with merely fulfilling the terms of the agreement; we're committed to continuing the success story with "The Next Generation" Program for Public Education and Outreach on Lead-Based Paint.

THE NEXT GENERATION

As a result of the exceptional positive reception to the association's community outreach efforts on lead hazard awareness and contractor education under the cooperative NPCA-State Attorneys General Agreement, NPCA launched a new support initiative in January 2008, known as "The Next Generation" Program for Public Education and Outreach on Lead-Based Paint. The program continues the work with the many state and local agencies and advocacy groups encountered over the past four years, focusing on meeting the demand for lead-safety training, and working closely with recognized university-based organizations to develop innovative strategies on lead poisoning prevention.

In the first four months of 2008, "The Next Generation" program has seen a flurry of activity, with nearly 1,600 individuals trained in 63 classes in 24 states and Washington, D.C. Promotion of participation at scheduled training events is being supported by the Community Lead Education and Reduction Corps (CLEARCorps®), and its affiliates. The Training Network, NPCA's contractor administering "The Next Generation" program, has already scheduled classes through November 2008. The program website, www.lead safetraining.org, continues to provide information and facilitate registration. Also, early this year, CLEARCorps® representatives will be establishing links to various universities and state agencies advancing program innovations in lead poisoning prevention.



One of these university initiatives, the New England Lead Coordinating Committee (NELCC, which operates out of the University of Connecticut at Storrs in the six New England states), has an established working relationship with NPCA that last year resulted in expansion of the equipment discount program established under the NPCA-State Attorneys General Agreement through state agencies. This plan will help promote the NELCC's new "Keep it Clean/Don't Spread Lead" program, and a Spanish translation of the new NELCC lead brochure entitled "Don't Spread Lead." Recently, NELCC reviewed a revised layout for its "Don't Spread Lead" brochure developed by NPCA

"THE U.S. PAINT INDUSTRY HAS CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN FORMULATING PRODUCTS WITHOUT THE USE OF LEAD COMPOUNDS,"

as a possible substitute for the older brochure NPCA members continue to distribute in support of EPA's Lead Pre-registration Education Rule (Lead PRE).

The value of NPCA's training has been reinforced recently by the publication of EPA's final rule requiring lead-safe work practices training for all renovation and remodeling workers. While the rule is not slated to go into effect until April 2009, the training NPCA has provided under the agreement is the HUD-EPA curriculum. Individuals trained using this curriculum can be "grandfathered" as certified in lead-safe renovation practices, provided they complete a short "refresher course" to address new requirements in the rule for lead test kits and post-renovation cleanup verification methods. NPCA is in discussions with EPA officials to determine how to best facilitate bringing this "refresher course" to the now 17,500 previously trained individuals, most likely through some sort of online short course.

Another NPCA goal for "The Next Generation" program is to utilize CLEARCorps® expertise and services to establish a clearinghouse for innovative practices that advance public awareness of lead hazards, in particular, through retail sales locations. Three of CLEARCorps® operating sites are currently developing tools for public education that will be offered through participating retail establishments with the support of community groups. CLEARCorps® will

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continue to monitor and respond to organizations seeking to implement similar programs, sharing its expertise, and where feasible, assisting in implementation efforts. "The Next Generation" program web site, www.lead safetraining.org, will serve as a critical communication hub for the emerging clearinghouse.

NPCA steadfastly encourages its members to continue their efforts to communicate with retailers on lead safety, stressing that the paint industry is counting on them to be responsive to customer requests for information; reinforce the fact that the prescribed product warnings are important to reduce the risk of lead dust exposure; and ensure that retailers are aware of the simple and effective online training program (in English and Spanish) offered by NPCA at www.repaintsafe.org or available on mini-diskette from NPCA. This program can be used to help increase retailers' knowledge and confidence in assisting customers concerned about lead-based paint.

LOOKING AHEAD

NPCA and its members continue to place the highest priority on helping the nation meet its goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning by 2010. Achieving this will require continued support from consumer paint manufacturers and others in the supply chain that can help disseminate the message of lead-safe work practices.

For more information on "The Next Generation" program, contact NPCA's Vice President of Environmental, Health and International Affairs, Steve Sides (ssides@paint.org), or visit <http://lead safetraining.org>. We encourage you to visit our web site, www.Paint.org, for a library of resources on lead exposure safety and lead-safe work practices.

NPCA'S PROACTIVE HISTORY

Consumer paints have not contained lead since it was banned by federal regulation in 1978, completing lead use reduction efforts that started in the 1950s with the full support of the paint industry. In practice, well before the ban took effect, paint manufacturers either stopped using lead altogether or had reduced its use to a limited number of products. Industry support for lead use reduction started with efforts to bolster the American Academy of Pediatrics' 1954-55 efforts to sponsor a consensus standard set by the American Standards Association that effectively eliminated lead-based paints.

Since the early 1960s, NPCA has produced and broadly distributed public information education in English and Spanish designed to help consumers identify potential lead hazards in their homes and use proper techniques to avoid harm.

NPCA participated in two presidential lead task forces (under Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton) and contributed valuable input to the bellwether Maryland Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention commission in the early 1990s, leading to passage of comprehensive lead poisoning prevention legislation in Maryland. NPCA supports adoption of state model legislation throughout the nation that contains critical features to advance lead poisoning prevention, and offers practical incentives for landlords to keep housing stock lead-safe and relies on vigorous enforcement of prescribed duties.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued findings that stated, while lead levels of the vast majority of Americans were now safe, pockets of Americans living in older, ill-maintained housing were still at risk. Thus, in 1995, NPCA partnered with the non-profit Shriver Center at the University of Maryland Baltimore County to start CLEARCorps[®], the Community Lead Education and Reduction Corp. CLEARCorps[®] has since evolved, operating in nine U.S. cities and has received national recognition for its innovative ("targeted, feasible, and effective") work helping children in such ill-maintained housing avoid lead exposure.

The four-year agreement between NPCA and the State Attorneys General to increase public awareness of lead-based paint hazards and its evolution into a new, ongoing program — "The Next Generation" — of support services is the latest demonstration of the industry's commitment to the 2010 goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning.

More information is available at www.paint.org.



NPCA is a voluntary, nonprofit trade association representing paint and coatings manufacturers, raw materials suppliers and distributors. As the preeminent organization representing the paint and coatings industry in the United States, NPCA's primary role is to serve as ally and advocate on legislative, regulatory, and judicial issues at the federal, state and local levels.

1500 Rhode Island Avenue, NW • Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 462-6272 • Fax: (202) 462-8549 • Web site: www.paint.org