LEAD ENCAPSULANTS

An efficient and economical approach to lead paint

by Cole Stanton,
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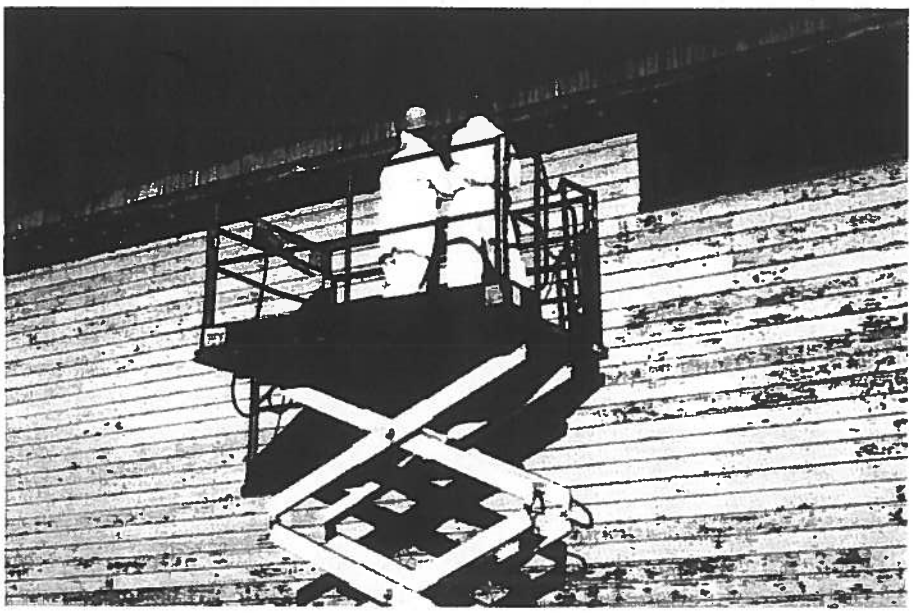
Three quarters of the residential and commercial structures built in the U.S. before 1978 contain lead-based paint. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), there are at least 57 million homes with lead-based paint that will need to be abated sooner or later. Tough lead laws are already in place in many states that either force or strongly encourage permanent abatement. The coming year will bring more regulations and tougher laws in those states where they are not already in place.

The bottom line: Contractors are going to hear more and more questions from their customers concerning lead-based paint. These circumstances make lead paint encapsulants another specialty coating well-suited to generate new business. Since encapsulation is generally the only method of abatement that unlicensed contractors can utilize, they now have a solution to offer their customers when questions arise.



Indeed, encapsulants for lead-based paint should not be ignored. The existence of lead-poisoned children is real, and that means the tough lead paint laws are here to stay. Contractors will soon be forced to address lead-based paint. By the end of 1998, every state is required to have a lead law in place. These laws must meet or beat the already tough federal standards. Contractors who ignore the lead paint issue, or feel that it does not affect them or their clientele directly, will fail to supply their customers with the expert service they expect. The best proof of the potential of this emerging market is that thousands of contractors have already added encapsulation to there service offering – making them responsive to the needs of their customers, their community, and their bottom line.

So how does a contractor with limited knowledge of the lead-based paint abatement market select an encapsulant? Below are a few facts to consider when choosing an encapsulant.

Ease of Use

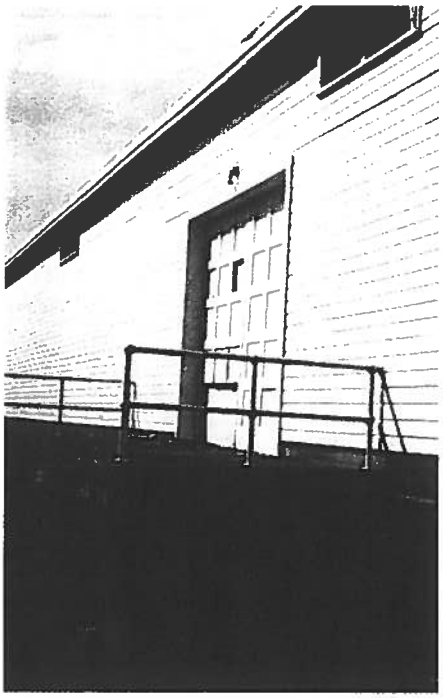
Encapsulants are topically applied coatings designed to form a permanent, flexible and durable barrier against lead-based paint. While these products vary in terms of composition and appearance, most are fundamentally similar in that they are used like paint. Brush, roll or spray applied, the reduction in cost from encapsulating rather than removing lead-based paint is obvious. Lead-based paints are inherently durable, which is why they have been used so extensively. Consequently, lead-based paint it is not only hazardous, but also extremely difficult to remove, making encapsulation the simplest method of abatement to use.

Cost-Effectiveness

The efficiency of an encapsulant comes from the thickness at which it must be applied. When encapsulants are evaluated in laboratory performance testing, proper application is determined by noting the minimum thickness at which the product passes every test. Obviously, the lower the approved film thickness, the more economical the product is. Coverage for encapsulants generally falls within a range of 30-120 square feet per gallon for interior applications. Thicker exterior applications may get slightly less coverage per gallon. In the end, if less material, fewer steps and less labor are required, time and money is saved, and the potential for future business is greater, lead based paint or otherwise.

Aesthetics

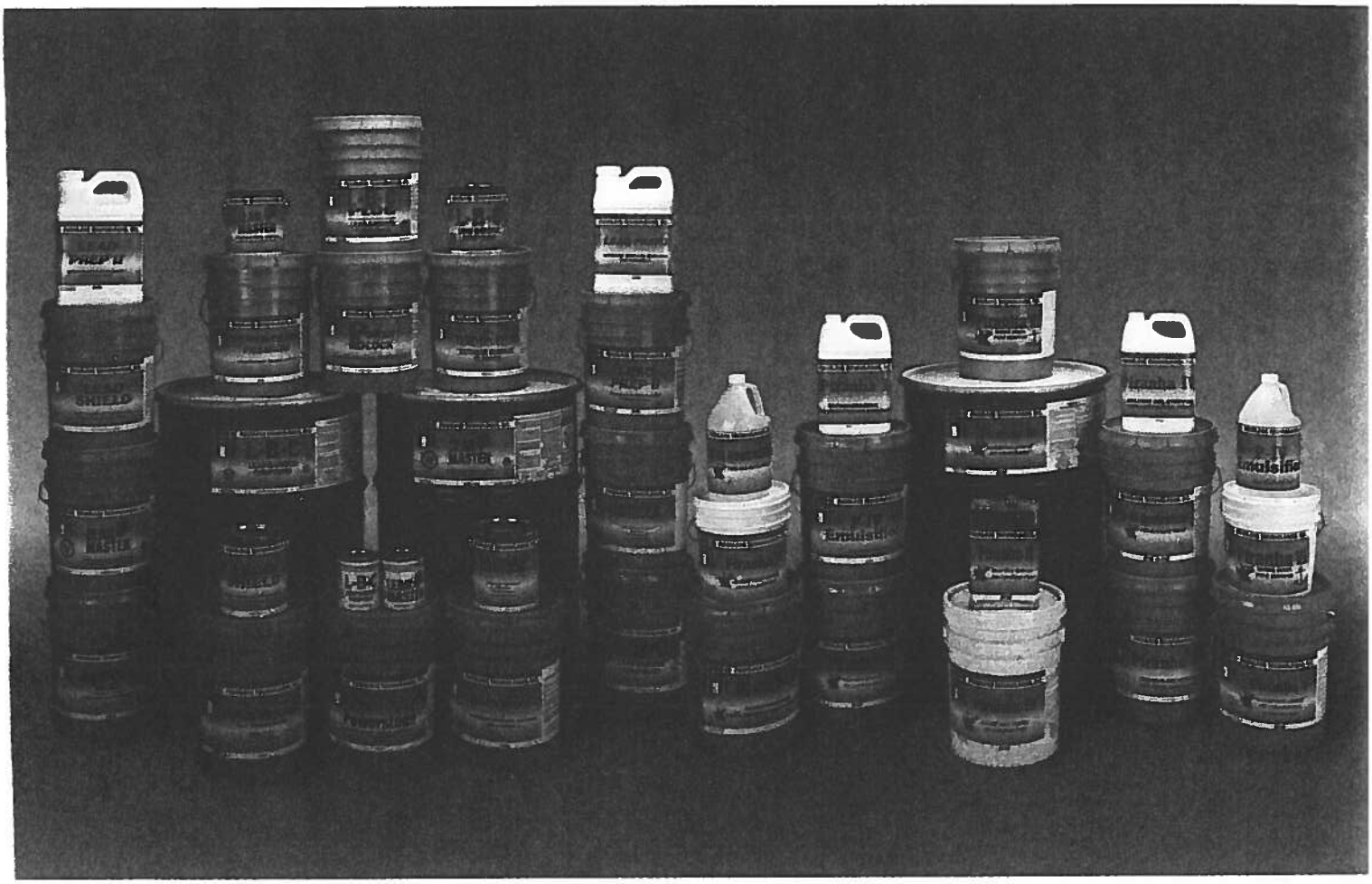
All encapsulants are formulated differently. Consequently, each product may display certain characteristics that might make one or the other better suited for a given application. Epoxy-urethane polymer systems form a paint-like surface with excellent hardness. Elastomeric encapsulants offer superb flexibility and excellent cohesion. Cementitious products are thick and have a stucco-like appearance with a hard finish. These are better suited for surfaces that will experience rough handling. Lastly, thermoplastic-elastomeric systems combine hardness and flexibility to provide a superior, and extremely versatile coating that looks and feels like paint. Many manufacturers offer custom colors as an added service. Contractors should obtain dry samples of products so they may see the finish quality, texture, and film thickness for themselves.



Paintability

EPA and HUD recognize that while an encapsulant must maintain a barrier between lead and the environment, property owners will potentially want to repaint the encapsulated surfaces to change its color or aesthetics. Therefore, one of the performance tests all encapsulants must pass is whether or not they may be painted over with an ordinary water-based or oil-based paint. Check with encapsulant manufacturers for their specific guidelines concerning how paint may be applied over their products.

Lead Paint?
We Have The Answer.



Fiberlock is the most trusted name in the lead-based paint abatement industry. Our premium-quality encapsulant, L-B-C® Lead Barrier Compound, is the #1 selling encapsulant in the U.S. and is approved in all 50 states for both interior and exterior applications. L-B-C is a proprietary water-based blend of thermo-plastics and elastomerics, providing a durable yet flexible barrier and permanent abatement against the hazards of lead paint. A non toxic, worker-safe, one-part product, L-B-C can be applied in a single easy 7 mil spray application.

Satisfied customers everywhere agree that L-B-C is the best encapsulant on the market today. We stock nine designer colors and can custom-tint larger quantities. L-B-C meets all HUD, EPA, ASTM, and OSHA standards and is UL® classified.

Create a win-win situation for your store and your customers by choosing L-B-C. For more information on L-B-C and the entire Fiberlock lead abatement line, please call us at 1-800-FIBERLK (1-800-342-3755).

Visit us on the Web at: http://www.fiberlock.com

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State Certifications

For contractors in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, Maryland and New York, it is imperative that you select an encapsulant that appears on the list of acceptable products for that state. In these states, health or environmental authorities at the state level have evaluated encapsulants themselves to create a list of acceptable products. Several states without their own lists recommend that encapsulant users refer to products certified by New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio or Maryland. Under federal law, encapsulation is an approved abatement method in all fifty states, however, some states have chosen not to create a list of approved products, or have not finished one at this time.

Anti-Ingestant

Superior encapsulants contain a bitter-tasting, anti-ingestant additive that deters children from chewing on lead painted surfaces. These additives are extremely effective and provide extra protection and peace of mind for the resident or building owner as well as the contractor.

Exposure

Several encapsulant manufactures tout a single product that can be used for both interior and exterior surfaces. However, many of these are restricted with regards to exposure. Other encapsulant manufacturers offer two different formulas, one recommended for interior use and one for exterior applications. Be sure that the encapsulant you choose will meet your application needs.

Warranty

Federal regulations require any true encapsulant to carry a 20-year manufacturer's warranty. Several manufacturers are willing to extend this type of warranty to their product. Ask for a copy of the warranty in writing before

choosing an encapsulant because some manufacturers do not meet this HUD requirement.

Performance Testing

Customers who will be specifying a lead-based paint encapsulant for larger projects (e.g., consultants, architects and public health officials) will be careful to examine whether or not the product truly performs as claimed. Manufacturers of encapsulation products should be able to supply performance testing reports from independent laboratories. When reading these reports, check specifically for credentials like fire-testing classification from Underwriters Laboratories (UL®) and independent testing to the UPITT Combustion Toxicity Protocol. APC

For more information on lead encapsulants or Fiberlock Technologies, Inc., call 800-342-3755.

National Gallery of Art Embraces Lead Encapsulant

The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. is one of the country's most distinguished museums. Each year more than 5 million people visit the gallery to view the world famous exhibits that it houses. Currently, the museum is undergoing a major face lift, though you might not notice it.

The entire skylight system in the museum's attic is being replaced. The skylights serve as the major source of natural light to the museum and the exhibits below. Once the project began taking shape in 1996 and the skylights were removed and replaced, it quickly became apparent that the surrounding area in the attic was in poor condition. Dingy, chipping paint on brick walls and rust on I-beams and metal window frames were now even more obvious with the installation of new, clean skylights. However, the dirt and grime was the least of the gallery's problems – the area was also found to be contaminated with lead based paint.

Over 20,000 square feet of walls, ceilings, windows, skylights, and steel support beams for the skylight system in the attic required abatement. The unique style of construction found in the museum's attic would have made it virtually impossible to chemically remove all of the lead-based paint from the intricate architecture. In addition, the cost of complete removal would have been great. A simpler and more cost-effective solution was needed.

Museum officials wanted the safest, fastest and most economical solution available. Encapsulation was found to be the only practical method of abatement for the museum's requirements. The gallery sought the help of Ballard and Associates, Inc., an abatement contractor based in Fairfax, Va. who in turn recommended the products of encapsulant manufacturer Fiberlock Technologies, Inc.

The beauty of using lead encapsulants is that their application is as easy as repainting. The only substrates at the Gallery that required extensive surface prep were the rusted metal surfaces. Ballard used Fiberlock's water based, rust inhibiting direct-to-metal primer (Power Rust Stop).