

Lead-Paint Buzz Boosts Awareness of Cost-Effective Encapsulation Option

In the department of silver linings, coatings manufacturers might find that the buzz surrounding litigation over lead-based paint hazards might generate something positive — increased awareness of a cost-effective method of addressing the threat posed by the presence of lead paint in older housing.

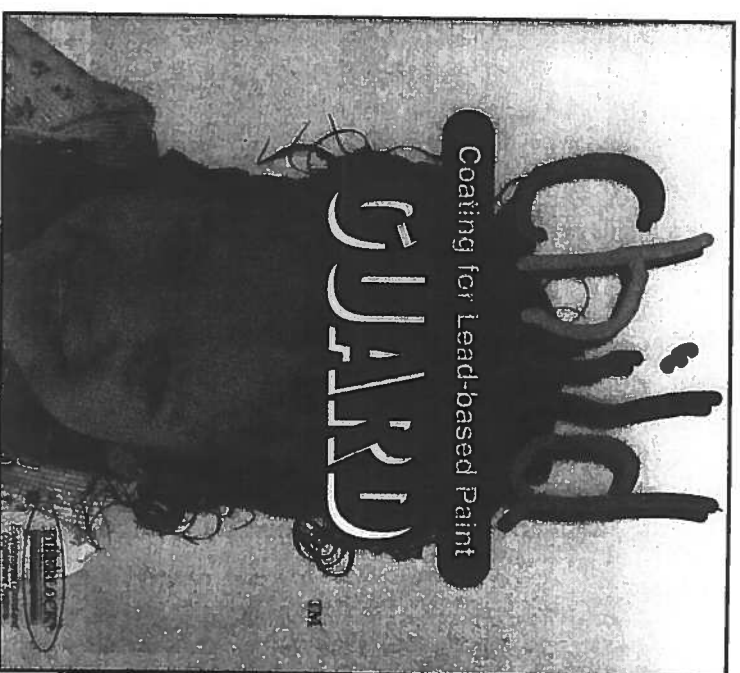
So says Cole Stanton of Fiberlock Technologies Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of specialty coatings manufacturer California Products Corp. and a major player in the emerging lead-encapsulant market. Stanton, Fiberlock's manager of Technical Sales and Compliance, says his company is seeing a marked increase in interest in encapsulation products, a phenomenon that can be traced to developments in the regulatory realm, in the marketplace and in the courts.

Fiberlock manufactures encapsulation products for the consumer and professional-contractor markets, and about a year ago began expending considerable energy in an effort to build sales to the homeowner with the rollout of the "ChildGuard" encapsulant brand. The company has sold its "L-B-C" (Lead Barrier Compound) product for several years to the professional abatement-contractor market. ChildGuard is a successor to Fiberlock's "Leadmaster" brand, and features more appealing packaging — can labels showing the big, smiling faces of children — as well as a product name that the company says strikes a more resonant chord with homeowners concerned about health and safety issues. Stanton says the company also came out with effective point-of-purchase promotional materials and launched an advertising program in a strategy to energize sales to painting contractors and DIY users.

The combination of promotion and packaging "gets the message across that this is something you could do to make a home safe for children," Stanton says.

Unlike the largely decorative function of most architectural paint, encapsulants are designed to create a physical barrier between lead and the environment. Stanton points out. The products must pass

demanding wet- and dry-scrub, durability, impact resistance, and other performance tests, and must exhibit flexibility "far in excess of any paint," he says. He describes Fiberlock's products as waterborne thermoplastic elastomeric copolymers — a waterborne blend of plastic resin and synthetic rubber "with some bells and whistles thrown in." Those extras include a bitter-tasting anti-ingestion agent. Other raw materi-



als are generally "paint-like," including common pigments such as titanium dioxide, standard colorants and coalescent solvents.

Toxicity requirements are stringent, and vary from state to state, Stanton says. A company that's serious about the market should take a look at the most demanding rules such as those in place in Connecticut, Massachusetts or Ohio, he says. In Connecticut,

By Joe Maty / News Editor

for example, companies must submit MSDSs for each raw material contained in the encapsulant, not just the MSDS for the formulated encapsulant itself.

"Once you're approved in a state like Connecticut, Massachusetts or Ohio, you've got something," Stanton says. "Then, it's unimpeachable."

"Once you're approved in a state like Connecticut, Massachusetts or Ohio, you've got something," Stanton says.

Another major prerequisite for encapsulants is the need to provide a 20-year performance warranty, for both interior and exterior products. But Stanton says the gauntlet of performance requirements that the encapsulant must negotiate essentially makes the 20-year warranty an afterthought. "It's rarely been an issue. I don't know of a single case where there was litigation or a user making a claim," he says. If a surface is prepared properly, "it should perform just as it did in the lab."

Fiberlock got an early jump in the business, meeting the tough protocol for encapsulants established by the state of Massachusetts in the early 1990s. The state is home to the oldest housing stock in the nation, on average, and thus officials there were concerned about the lead-hazard threat. The Massachusetts regulation also set some stringent requirements for products marketed as encapsulants, and required that those products pass testing conducted by an independent laboratory.

FOR THOSE

WHO REALLY PREFER WATER...

Black Spiny Frog

The W2K® 2000 resin technology developed by U. S. Polymers is your solution. This unique water-reducible polyol chemistry (patents applied for) allows for the development of low acid value, **100% NV resins** which are readily water reducible without the addition of high levels of amine. Benefits of coatings using this technology include:

- **Near zero** VOC and **no** HAPs: low odor
- Component blend does not require mechanical mixing to achieve compatibility
- Pot life of four to five hours
- Good hardness development with overnight cure
- 200 MEK double rubs
- **Excellent adhesion in direct-to-metal (DTM) applications**
- Excellent flexibility (160 In/Lbs direct and reverse impact in DTM applications)
- High specular gloss (90+ at 60 degree angle)
- Excellent taber abrasion resistance (-35mg loss per 1000 cycles)
- Excellent flow and leveling
- Typical applications include exterior metal structures, chemical tanks, concrete floors, industrial maintenance, farm equipment
- **Extremely competitive pricing**

This performance is indicative of the strengths of the 1.5 : 1 stoichiometry formulation.

Similar resin technology is also available in one-component bake systems (W1K® 1000). Call **toll-free** for additional information.

(888) 447-2788

US POLYMERS, Inc.

AFFILIATED WITH ACCUREZ CORPORATION
300 EAST PRIMM STREET • ST. LOUIS, MO 63111
(314) 638-1632 • FAX: (314) 638-3100 • www.uspolymers.com

Tomato Frog





Andy DeFusco
Senior Principal
Applications
Chemist
Air Products
Polymers, L.P.

Q What is "touch-up" and how can I best achieve it in interior flat paints?

A Touch-up refers to the ability of a second coat of paint to exhibit the same angular sheen, color, and overall appearance as the first coat, regardless of the method of application or temperature at which the coating is applied.

One of the best ways to ensure excellent touch-up properties is by using vinyl acetate-ethylene (VAE) copolymers. VAEs have traditionally exhibited the best touch-up properties of any latex used in architectural coatings, typically in formulations containing very low levels of solvent. Their low minimum filming temperature and small particle size permit superior touch-up in low- and room-temperature applications. Air Products Polymers offers the industry's most extensive line of VAEs for coatings worldwide, including the industry standard for touch-up (Airtlex® 500 latex), a high scrub product (Airtlex 809), a versatile interior/exterior binder (Airtlex 728), and a new product designed for lower PVC systems (Airtlex 810 latex).

For more information or to submit a question for "Ask the Expert," visit www.airproducts.com/polymers or call (800) 345-3148.

AIR PRODUCTS
POLYMERS

Global Reach. Local Commitment.

Air Products Polymers, L.P.
7201 Hamilton Blvd.
Allentown, PA 18195-1501
(800) 345-3148

©2000 Air Products Polymers, L.P.

27B

TRENDS AND INSIGHTS

A combination of new regulatory requirements and increased awareness of the potential hazard posed by lead is generating considerable interest in encapsulation, particularly because it offers a lower-cost option in addressing the problem, Stanton says. "Five years ago, the awareness that encapsulation was one solution was really nonexistent," he says. One key factor is new regulations that require property owners, real-estate companies and now contractors in the home-repair business to formally disclose to

While the public sector — HUD and housing authorities — and real-estate professionals have generally become informed about the encapsulation option, Stanton says "Joe Homeowner" remains less knowledgeable. But that's beginning to change, thanks in large part to the Internet. Fiberlock is seeing a significant increase in demand, due in part to increased public awareness. "We're seeing newspaper articles all over the country, a ton of hits on our website on a daily basis," he says. "It's red hot for us at

A combination of new regulatory requirements and increased awareness of the potential hazard posed by lead is generating considerable interest in encapsulation...

occupants the fact that lead may be present in structures built before 1978. Those regulations have been going into effect in stages over the last several years.

In addition, Stanton says, later this year all housing associated with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) will be subject to similar disclosure rules.

Stanton says he has seen a major surge in inquiries about encapsulants. And with an estimated 70 million U.S. residences containing lead, the market's potential is immense. Anyone wanting to "do the math" would agree, what with the square footage of potential surfaces running anywhere from 1,200-5,000 square feet or more per housing unit. Throw into the equation a coverage rate, tops, of 125 square feet per gallon, and selling prices that run from \$27-40 per gallon, and the numbers begin to multiply exponentially. "It becomes a staggeringly huge number," Stanton says.

a normally slow time of the year."

Fiberlock also received a boost by capturing a "Best New Product for 2000" award from *Today's Homeowner* magazine. The magazine says the awards are based on "quality, innovation, value, style, ease of installation, ease of use, and long-term reliability." The publication offers advice on home maintenance and improvement.

Stanton says he's not sure what impact, if any, litigation related to lead paint might have on this emerging encapsulant market. But he said the parties to such litigation might consider the arrival of encapsulation products as a tool that could help to address the lead-containment aspect of these legal disputes. Encapsulation, he noted, costs an estimated \$3 or so per square foot, far less than the \$8-15 per square foot for more aggressive abatement methods such as removal or enclosure of lead-containing surfaces. ●