

Build Business & Serve Customers With Lead Paint Encapsulation

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The Federal government has declared lead-based paint to be the number one environmental health threat to children in the United States today.

It is estimated that one out of every six children in this country now demonstrate some level of irreversible lead poisoning. Most of these children did not ingest paint chips, as would most commonly be assumed, instead, many have simply inhaled lead contaminated dust generated from surfaces painted with lead-based paint.

The underdeveloped bone structures of children under six cannot absorb lead as readily as the adult skeletal system can. Consequently, lead settles in various vital organs of the child's body, like the brain and liver. Even the smallest levels of lead can cause health problems in children including Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), hyperactivity, retardation, and learning disabilities.

At higher levels of poisoning, health problems are often much more severe and can be marked by impaired motor functions, convulsions, and other more serious behavioral and health problems.

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: Independent paint dealers are going to hear more and more questions from their customers concerning lead-based paint. Prudent dealers will keep themselves educated concerning the new requirements that their contractor and property owner clientele must satisfy.

For independent paint dealers, these circumstances have made lead paint encapsulants another specialty coating well-suited to their business. Since encapsulation is generally the only method of abatement that unlicensed property owners and contractors can utilize, paint dealers now have a solution they can offer to their customers when questions arise. Not to mention, encapsulants offer the dealer yet another specialty coating that can generate new business.

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

- **Warranty** – Federal regulations require any true encapsulant to carry a twenty-year manufacturer's warranty. Several encapsulant 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 that 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 Test-

Lead Paint Abatement

icity Protocol.

- **State Certifications** – For dealers in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Ohio, Maryland, and New York, it is imperative that a dealer 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 furnished one at this time.

- **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, the end user saves both time and money – and brings future business, lead based paint or otherwise, back to that dealer.

- **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 can be applied over their products.

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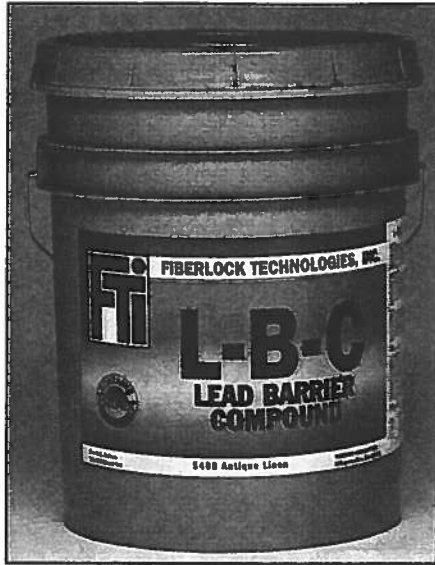
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• **Anti-Ingessant** – Superior encapsulants contain a bitter-tasting, anti-ingessant additive that deters children from chewing on lead painted surfaces.



These additives are extremely effective, and provide extra protection and peace of mind for the dealer, contractor, and resident.

• **Exposure** – Several encapsulant manufacturers 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 2 different formulas, one recommended for interior use and one for exterior applications.

• **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 have superb flexibility and excellent cohesion.

Cementitious products are thick and have a stucco-like appearance with a hard finish. They are better suited for surfaces which will experience rough handling.

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Many manufacturers even offer custom colors as an added service. Dealers should obtain dry samples of products so they may see the fin-

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Lead Paint Abatement

ish quality, texture, and film thickness for themselves.

- **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 is not only hazardous, but also extremely difficult to remove, making encapsulation the simplest method of abatement to use.

Overall, encapsulants for lead-based paint represent a product category that should NOT be ignored. The existence of lead poisoned children is very real, and that means that the tough lead paint laws are here to stay. Dealers 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.

Dealers 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 independent paint dealers have already added encapsulants to their product offerings, making them responsive to the needs of their customers, their community, and their bottom line.

Can you say "lead poisoning?"

Can you say "lead poisoning?" Mr. Rogers can, and together with Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Kordell Stewart, members of the Women's National Basketball Association, and other well known sports and entertainment celebrities, the push is on to inform upper, middle, and underprivileged America about the importance of lead testing and remediation.

Launched in November by the White House, the Campaign for a Lead-Safe America, with a slogan of "Take the Lead Against Lead," plans to put this issue more directly in front of the consumer. Other big players include 2nd Lady Tipper Gore, HUD Secretary Andrew Cuomo, and the EPA's Carol Browner.

"The government is finally getting its act together," says Judith Orr of PPI, makers of the Lead Alert test kit. "Lead is still the number one environmental health problem for children."

For retailers, this project distributes educational materials and posters, plus a lead-related video featuring characters from *Sesame Street*, which is slated to play in about 6,000 major hardware stores and home centers.

This is good news for the makers and the sellers of home lead test kits, which are now getting some much deserved attention from various government agencies. "It seems that HUD, EPA, NIOSH, and NIST have instructed whoever does research to put their heads together on the spot tests," says Orr. "The EPA hasn't been a great supporter of these," she noted. "They haven't blacklisted screening tests, but they haven't given them an endorsement either. Now they are ready

to take a look at it. There's enough concrete evidence from people who have used them – and enough pressure has been brought to bear – that they need to get these tests out where the consumer can access them."

Another facet of this campaign will take a more adult approach, with a focus on enforcing the disclosure requirements of the federal "right to know" rule in 25 cities with a high concentration of homes harboring potential lead liability.

For customers who think they're too upper-crust to be affected by lead, Orr presented us these statistics, supplied by the EPA in their National Survey of Lead-Based Paint in Housing from April, 1995.

- 85% of homes valued at more than \$150,000 contain lead based paint.
- 68% of homes valued from \$80,000 to \$149,000 contain lead based paint.
- 90% of homes valued from \$40,000 to \$79,000 contain lead based paint
- 92% of homes valued at less than \$40,000 contain lead based paint.
- In households with an income of more than \$30,000, 81% of dwellings contained lead based paint, compared with a not much greater 85% for households with income less than \$30,000.
- 85% of single family homes built before 1980 contain lead based paint, as do 77% of multi family units.
- Healthy adults are susceptible to lead poisoning, even though children and pregnant women bear the highest risk.