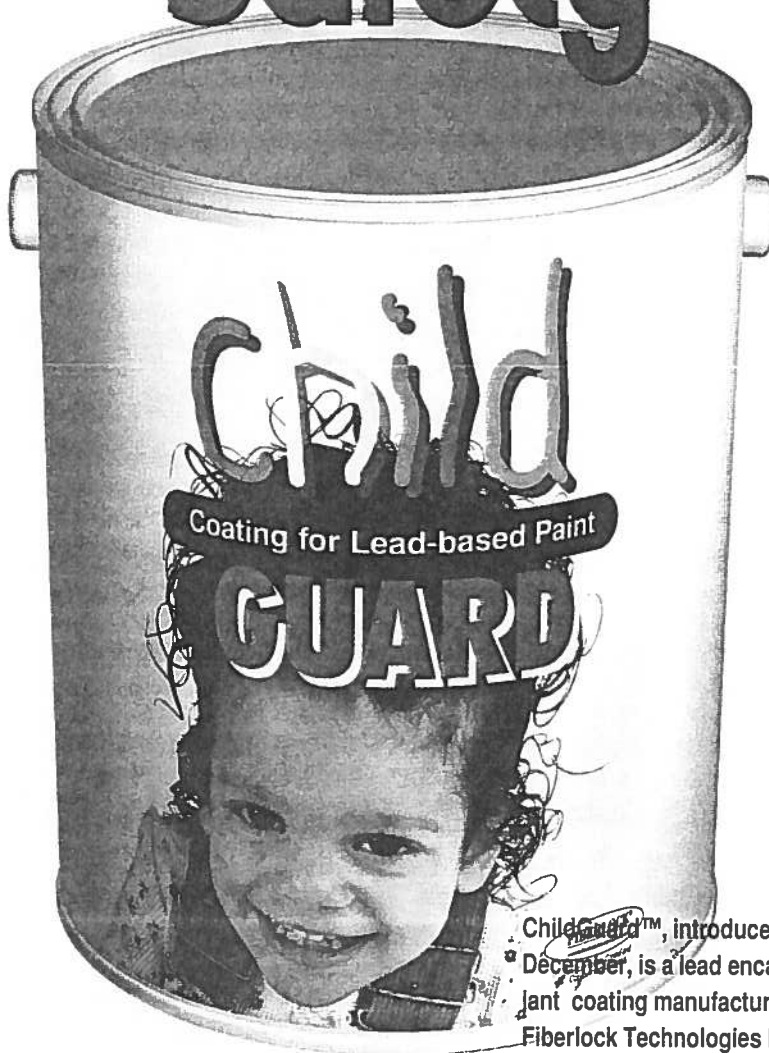


Providing Lead Safety



ChildGuard™, introduced last December, is a lead encapsulant coating manufactured by Fiberlock Technologies Inc.

Independent paint dealers have long been providing their customers with products that make their homes look better. There's an opportunity, though, to offer consumers another important service: to provide them with products that help

to make their homes safer. A key group of home safety products are those that detect lead in paint and those that can render lead paint on walls harmless.

How big of a safety hazard is leaded paint in 1999? "It's still a very sig-

nificant problem," said Cole Stanton, technical sales manager for Fiberlock Technologies Inc., which manufactures lead encapsulation coatings. "Lead poisoning by all accounts is still the No. 1 environmental health threat among children under 6 years old. The number of children being screened for lead is still small, and there are still several states without a framework for how lead paint should be handled."

The potential effects of lead poisoning on children are numerous and severe: brain damage, reading and learning disabilities, speech and language handicaps, lowered IQ, neurological deficits, mental retardation, hearing loss, behavior problems, juve-

Dealers Can Offer An Important Customer Service By Selling Lead Detection, Encapsulation Products

nile delinquency, kidney disease, heart disease, stroke and death.

There's more bad news, as experts agree on the following:

(1) The damage caused by lead in a child's system frequently is permanent; the child does not become cured simply by the removal of lead from his environment.

(2) All too often a symptom, such as hyperactivity, is first presumed to be caused by something other than lead poisoning, and the child is not tested for the presence of lead in his body.

(3) Lead can do its damage in very low concentrations. The Centers for Disease Control's threshold



KNOW LEAD™, a home lead test kit manufactured by Carolina Environment Inc.

for lead toxicity, 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter of whole blood, has been compared to just several grains of salt in one-half cup of liquid.

Lead from paint can get into a child's system by several means. There, of course, is the much-publicized scenario of a small child eating lead paint chips that have flaked off a wall. In addition, the child can ingest lead dust that is stirred up when paint is removed from walls during renovation.

Apart from the fact that young children often cannot be made to understand that lead is dangerous, they also are at increased risk because their bodies, when compared to the adult body, are less capable of dealing with ingested lead. "Their body mass is smaller, and their neurological system is still developing," said Dianne Horton, president of Carolina Environment Inc., manufacturers of KNOW LEAD™, a home testing kit for the presence of lead in paint.

According to Dori Reissman, M.D., epidemic intelligence officer for the Lead Poisoning Prevention Branch at the National Center for Environmental Health, an agency within the CDC, if a child under 6 years old and an adult are exposed to the same amount of lead, the child's body will absorb 50 percent of the lead, while the adult's fully developed body will

absorb only 15 percent of the lead.

Many Homes Still Contain Lead Paint

And just how much leaded paint is in homes these days? Unfortunately, there's quite a lot. Although the federal government outlawed the use of leaded paint in homes in 1978, there are still 64 million homes containing lead paint, said Marcia Stone, president of Hy-

briVet Systems Inc., makers of Lead-Check®, another home test kit for the presence of lead in paint.

Just where are most of these homes that still contain lead paint? Experts generally agree on the presence of a "Lead Belt" consisting of the Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states. More homes containing lead paint are found in these areas because they tend to have older housing stock than most other areas of the country. "The Northeast tends to have more older homes, but that doesn't mean that if you live in the South, you're safe," Stone stated.

A good deal of lead paint is found in both rural and urban homes. "I think there's real concern if people think it (the lead paint problem) is limited to urban America," said Dan Cohen, vice president of Back To Nature Products Co., which manufactures a lead encapsulant coating, a lead dust cleaner and four lead paint removers. "The problem is everywhere you have older homes." And just how well is the problem of lead in paint and other substances being combated? How helpful have federal and state educational "outreach" programs been?

Paint Stores Can Help Education Efforts

"The amount of children at risk has come down significantly, but

there's still a long way to go," said John Zilka, president of Applied Systems Inc., a consulting firm specializing in lead hazard evaluation and control services. "The angle is to do a better job of reaching John and Jane Q. Public."

Experts agree that reaching the public is where paint stores can really help the effort to combat the lead in paint hazard.

"A retail store would be a great place for public education on this matter," stated Steve Weil, publisher of *DELEADING* magazine. "There's government literature that they (retailers) can get hold of easily, and it doesn't cost anything. There are EPA booklets, and state health departments often have the same type of literature. It's free—retailers would just have to make a phone call or two to get a box of it."

Horton commented that paint stores would be providing a good public service if their salespeople would be aware of the lead issue and mention it to customers who have



A display of Back To Nature's products, designed to help the consumer correct a lead paint problem.

said they're doing renovation work on their homes. The salespeople could bring up the lead issue by simply asking the customer if their home was built prior to 1978, and, if so, if the home has been checked for lead.

"So many lead poisoning cases occur as a result of good-intention renovations," said Horton. "Asking one question can save a kid's IQ. It's very inexpensive to know (if your house paint contains lead) before you damage a child forever."

Cohen pointed out that lead detection kits, paint removers and encapsulation coatings would be logical items for a paint store to carry. "It wouldn't be completely new to dealers because it relates to products they've sold for a long time, such as coatings and strippers," Cohen said. "It would help them service and educate their existing customers. If they want to be service-oriented, it's a

specialized market with which they can generate revenue."

Products Paint Dealers Can Carry

Lead detection kits are inexpensive and easy for the DIYer to use.

LeadCheck, which is marketed by Homax Inc., has been on the market since 1992, Stone said.

The LeadCheck swabs come in two-packs, four-packs and 12-packs. A swab yielding a negative result for lead can be used again, Stone said. "It's a more economical way to test for the lead hazard than calling an inspector in—that can cost several hundred dollars," she added. "We hope more paint stores will carry LeadCheck. A paint store is an ideal place for the product to be found."

KNOW LEAD has been available to the industrial marketplace for five years and has been available to the general public for three years, Horton stated. Its testing device is called a



LeadCheck®, a home lead test kit manufactured by HybriVet Systems Inc.



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“test dauber,” which is available in two-packs, four-packs and 10-packs. The product’s retail price is under \$4 per test, Horton said.

As for lead encapsulation coatings, Fiberlock’s product, called ChildGuard™, just became available to the public last December. It is a derivative of Lead Barrier Compound, an encapsulant that Fiberlock has sold to the industrial market since 1993.

Stanton said ChildGuard, which is tintable and carries a 20-year warranty, retails for about \$30 per gallon. That price compares favorably with the cost of removing lead paint from a wall, which Stanton said can run from \$8 to \$15 per square foot. Two coats of ChildGuard applied over lead paint on a wall will render the lead permanently harmless, Stanton noted.

ChildGuard is being sold exclusively at independent paint stores. “The reason for our emphasis on independent paint dealers is that we have a greater level of confidence in their employees’ skill level,” Stanton stated. He added that the independent dealer’s employees, because they tend to be more knowledgeable than employees of other types of stores, are better able to point out the virtues of a product such as ChildGuard.

Another company involved in lead abatement is Insl-x Products Corp. According to Jim Boyce, technical services manager for Insl-x, the company’s primary focus in the past has

been with lead abatement in the industrial arena, such as with fuel storage tanks and bridges. However, the company since the early 1990s has manufactured Insl-Cap™, an encapsulant aimed at the architectural arena. Insl-Cap can be brushed on, rolled on or spray-applied, Boyce stated.

Back to Nature makes three types of products for the lead in paint arena: Protect-A-Coat™, a lead encapsulant

coating; Lead-Clean™, a lead dust cleaner; and Ready-Strip™, Multi-Strip™, Lift-n-Strip™ and Aero-Strip™, all of which are environmentally safe lead paint removers. All of these products can be grouped together in Back to Nature’s Lead Paint Abatement Center, which includes shelf talkers, headers and literature. “It’s a one-stop solution for lead hazards,” Cohen said. ■



Insl-Cap™ from Insl-x Corp.

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