

# GUIDE TO LEAD SAFETY IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS

in Rhode Island



RI Historical Preservation  
& Heritage Commission



# GLOSSARY

**Lead safety/Lead safe:** The act of making a property safe from contamination by lead-based paint, lead dust, and lead in soil generally through short and long-term methods to remove it, or to isolate it from small children.

**Lead hazards:** Lead hazards include damaged lead-based painted surfaces, lead dust on interior surfaces, lead-contaminated soil, friction surfaces (like windows, doors, painted floors), lead-painted surfaces accessible to children, impact surfaces (like baseboards and door jams), and other interior surfaces showing age or deterioration.

**Lead hazard abatement strategies:** Long-term measures to remove lead-based paint hazards. They include on- or off-site paint removal, replacement of painted features with unleaded ones, removing or permanently covering contaminated soil, using enclosures (like drywall) as a barrier against painted surfaces, and covering surfaces with special encapsulant paints.

**Interim controls:** A set of measures to temporarily control lead-based paint hazards. They include thoroughly removing lead dust by using specialized cleaning techniques; stabilizing existing paint and damaged substrate followed by repainting; covering contaminated soil with sod, gravel or other landscaping controls; and educating tenants about lead hazards. Maintenance and monitoring can ensure that housing remains lead-safe.

**Preferred paint removal techniques:** Removal techniques include wet sanding, finish sanding with mechanical sanders with HEPA vacuum ventilation, low-heat paint stripping, chemical stripping (except methylene chloride), and off-site stripping with heat or chemicals. Do **not** use open flame or high-heat removal, dry-sanding, or abrasive removal.

**Safe work practices:** Set-up, work, and clean-up procedures designed to protect occupants and workers. Specific techniques include wet (not dry) scraping, laying plastic sheeting on floor of work area, and covering openings to prevent dust from leaving the work area. Workers should wear recommended personal safety equipment. Use of unsafe work practices such as torching of paint and use of hazardous strippers in unventilated areas should be avoided.

# DO YOU KNOW THAT RHODE ISLAND HAS MORE THAN 16,000 HISTORIC BUILDINGS...



more per square mile than any other state in the country? Your building may be designated historic if it was constructed before 1960. Historic buildings contribute to Rhode Island's sense of place, and they require special attention during renovation projects to ensure that they are healthy and safe places to live.

Owners of historic buildings need to know how to handle lead paint before they begin work on their buildings. Most buildings built before 1978 contain lead paint. Lead dust and chips from deteriorated or disturbed paint can create serious health hazards if not handled properly. Lead in water, dust, soil, and paint is hazardous to adults and children, particularly children under six years of age and pregnant women.

Historic buildings can be made lead safe while preserving their significant architectural features and finishes. With simple maintenance, inexpensive materials, and lead-safe renovation techniques, you can ensure the safety, character, and value of your building. **You may qualify for special incentives like tax credits, loans, and grants.**

Use lead safe work practices when you work on your building. It protects your investment, your tenants, and your family. And it's the law.

## LAWS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO LEAD SAFETY

**The Lead Hazard Mitigation Law (RIGL 42.128.1), website: [www.rilin.state.ri.us/statutes](http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/statutes)**

Requires that most owners of rental properties built before 1978 meet the following requirements: 1) Get a Certificate of Conformance; 2) Give tenants information about lead hazards; 3) Respond to tenant concerns; and 4) Keep Certificate of Conformance current.

**Lead Poisoning Prevention Act (RIGL 23-24.6 PB), website: [www.rilin.state.ri.us/statutes](http://www.rilin.state.ri.us/statutes)**

Owners must comply with the interior lead paint removal and renovation activities.

**RI Department of Environmental Management's Air Pollution Control Regulation #24, website: [www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/air/air24\\_93.pdf](http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/air/air24_93.pdf)**

Owners must comply with this regulation (Removal of Lead Based Paint from Exterior Surfaces) for exterior lead paint removal.

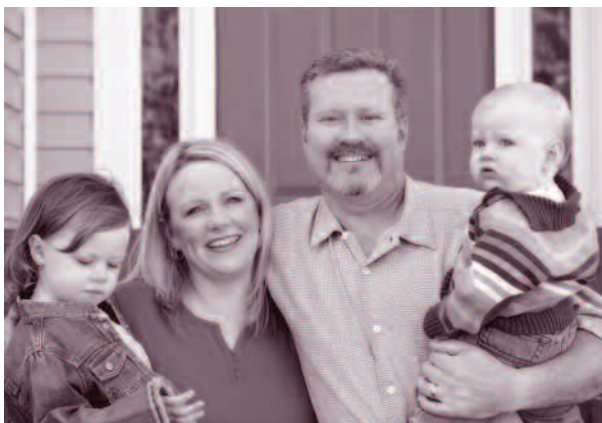
*It is your responsibility as a property owner to contact the appropriate state agencies and learn the particular requirements for your building and for your tenants. This guide can help you.*

# HISTORIC BUILDINGS

If your building was built before 1960, it may be historic and subject to special requirements. Follow these steps to determine if your building is historic and how to plan your renovation project.

## 1. Learn if the building is designated historic, and identify which historic features are important.

- » Contact the **Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission** (RIHPHC) to determine if your building is historic or is part of a historic district.
- » If the building is historic, determine which features and finishes are important. It is important to preserve original woodwork, such as windows, doors, porches, shingles, clapboards, trim, staircases, and mantels just to name a few. Generally, the front face of a building is more significant than the sides and back because they are less visible. Important areas on the first floor, such as the entrance or staircase, are more significant than private spaces like the bedroom, bathroom, or kitchen.
- » If the building is historic, your rehab project may be eligible for financial incentives like state and federal preservation tax credits and loans administered by the RIHPHC.
- » If the building is historic and you are receiving federal or state funding for the rehab project, it will be subject to Project Review by RIHPHC. Project Review ensures that local, state, and federal projects avoid or minimize harm to significant historic properties by making historic preservation part of the formal planning process. This review is required for federally funded or permitted projects by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800). The RI Historic Preservation Act (RIGL 42:45 et seq.) requires a similar review for state and local projects. Projects that are entirely privately funded are not subject to review unless a federal or state permit or license is required.
- » RIHPHC may advise you to contact your local planning department in case there are local requirements for work on your historic building. See the list of Local Historic District Commissions on page 5.



## 2. Find out what you need to know about lead hazards.

- » Contact the Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission (RI-HRC) to find a **Lead Hazard Awareness Class**. In Rhode Island, most owners of rental properties built before 1978 are required to take a three-hour Lead Hazard Awareness Class. In fact, all owners of all properties built before 1978 are strongly encouraged to take this class. The topics covered in this class include existing lead regulations (including the Lead Hazard Mitigation Act), lead hazard assessment, lead safe work practices, lead inspection process, and resources available when conducting lead repairs.
- » Owners, renovators, and painters should become very familiar with the **appropriate regulations for interior and exterior lead paint removal** (see Laws and Regulations box on page 1). Lead-based paint hazards should be evaluated to determine the level of their health threat and to decide the best way to make the property lead-safe.
- » For more information on lead hazards, see Glossary, inside the front cover.

## 3. Evaluate options for lead hazard control in historic buildings.

- » Consult the **Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation** ([www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide)) to guide your project. The Standards are ten basic principles created to help preserve the character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs. When working on a historic building, it is important to avoid the removal of significant historic materials, avoid using harsh abrasive cleaners or chemicals that damage historic materials, and avoid covering historic siding.
- » When you follow preservation guidelines and adhere to lead hazard regulations, your project will ensure the safety, character, and value of your building.

## 4. Learn about financial incentives for work on historic buildings and on lead hazard reduction.

- » Contact RIHPHC to learn more about financial incentives for projects on historic buildings. **RIHPHC administers three state and federal income tax credit programs (for homeowners and for investors) as well as loans and grants for qualified preservation projects.**
- » Contact **RI Division of Taxation** to learn about the **Residential Lead Abatement Tax Credit**. The personal income tax credit is equal to the amount actually paid for the required lead abatement or lead hazard mitigation. A maximum of \$1,500 per dwelling unit is credited for mitigation and up to \$5,000 per dwelling unit for abatement.
- » See the full list of funding sources on page 5.





## RESOURCES ON LEAD SAFETY AND YOUR HISTORIC BUILDING

The left column lists topics about which you may have questions.

The columns to the right show where to find answers.

Contact information is listed on the back of this Guide.

FIND THE ANSWER ►	RIHPHC	RI-DOH	RI-HRC	RI-DEM	LEAD INSPECTION	LEAD CLASSES	LICENSED CONTRACTOR
CONCERN ▼							
HISTORIC DETERMINATION	■						
WINDOWS, DOORS, STAIRS, FRICTION SURFACES	■	■	■		■	■	■
DAMAGED PAINT: INTERIOR	■	■	■		■	■	■
DAMAGED PAINT: EXTERIOR	■	■		■	■	■	■
EXTERIOR PAINT REMOVAL				■			
SOIL HAZARDS		■	■	■	■	■	■
LEAD HAZARDS		■	■		■	■	■
SINGLE-FAMILY OR OWNER-OCCUPIED REQUIREMENTS		■	■	■	■	■	■
MULTI-FAMILY REQUIREMENTS		■	■	■	■	■	■
PREGNANT WOMEN		■	■		■	■	■
CHILDREN UNDER 6 YEARS OF AGE		■	■		■	■	■
LEAD POISONED CHILD		■	■				
BLOOD LEAD LEVEL		■	■				
TRAINING/CERTIFICATION		■	■	■			

# CONTACT INFORMATION

This state agency provides information about historic determination, financial incentives for preservation, and resources for owners of historic buildings.

## **RIHPHC (RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission)**

(401) 222-2678, [www.preservation.ri.gov](http://www.preservation.ri.gov)

---

These three state agencies provide information about your responsibilities and rights as a homeowner, landlord, or tenant and provide information on inspectors, lead classes, and licensed contractors.

## **RI-HRC (Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission)**

(401) 222-LEAD (5323), [www.hrc.ri.gov/mitigation.html](http://www.hrc.ri.gov/mitigation.html)

## **RI-DOH (RI Department of Health), Family Health Information Line**

(800) 942-7434, [www.health.ri.gov/lead/index](http://www.health.ri.gov/lead/index)

[www.health.ri.gov/lead/environmental/removepaint.php](http://www.health.ri.gov/lead/environmental/removepaint.php)

## **RI-DEM (RI Department of Environmental Management)**

Office of Technical & Customer Assistance

(401) 222-4700 x4412, [www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/assist/extlead](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/assist/extlead)

---

## **Local Historic District Commissions**

If you live in one of the following communities, contact your city or town planning office to learn if your property is part of a local historic district and subject to review and/or eligible for incentives: Bristol, Cranston, Cumberland, East Greenwich, Glocester, Hopkinton, Newport, New Shoreham, North Kingstown, North Providence, Pawtucket, Providence, South Kingstown, Warren, Warwick

# FUNDING SOURCES

## **RI Division of Taxation, Residential Lead Abatement Tax Credit**

(401) 222-1040, [www.tax.ri.gov/form/2004/pers/6238.pdf](http://www.tax.ri.gov/form/2004/pers/6238.pdf)

## **RIHPHC (RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission)**

(401) 222-3103, [www.preservation.ri.gov/credits](http://www.preservation.ri.gov/credits)

Historic Homeowner Tax Credits [RI], Historic Preservation Investment State Tax Credits [RI],

Historic Preservation Tax Incentives [US], Preservation Loans [RI]

## **RI-HRC (Rhode Island Housing Resources Commission)**

(401) 222-LEAD (5323), [www.hrc.ri.gov/mitigation.html](http://www.hrc.ri.gov/mitigation.html)

## **RI Housing, Lead Hazard Reduction Program**

(401) 450-1350, [www.rihousing.com](http://www.rihousing.com)

## **City of Providence, City of Providence Lead Hazard Reduction Program**

(401) 351-4300, [www.providenceri.com](http://www.providenceri.com)

## **City of Warwick, Warwick Lead Hazard Reduction Program**

(401) 738-2000 x6375, [www.warwickri.gov/communitydevelopment/leadgrant/addresources.htm](http://www.warwickri.gov/communitydevelopment/leadgrant/addresources.htm)

## **City of Woonsocket, Woonsocket Healthy Homes Program**

(401) 767-9228, [www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us](http://www.ci.woonsocket.ri.us)

# GUIDES

**Free information to help you work in a lead-safe manner on your historic property**

*Easy Guide to Rehab Standards*

[www.preservation.ri.gov/resources/ezguide\\_rehab.php](http://www.preservation.ri.gov/resources/ezguide_rehab.php)

*EPA's Lead-Based Paint Pre-Renovation Rule booklet*

[www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/interiorfinal2.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/interiorfinal2.pdf)

*HUD's Lead Safe Housing Rule (Requirements for Notification, Evaluation and Reduction of Lead-Based Paint Hazards in Federally Owned Residential Property and Housing Receiving Federal Assistance)*

[www.hud.gov/offices/lead/leadsaferule](http://www.hud.gov/offices/lead/leadsaferule)

*Lead Paint Safety: A Field Guide for Painting, Home Maintenance, and Renovation Work*

[www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadsafetybk.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/leadsafetybk.pdf)

*Preservation Brief 37: Appropriate Methods for Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in Historic Housing*

[www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief37.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief37.htm)

*A Property Owner's Guide to Lead Inspection Services in Rhode Island*

[www.hrc.ri.gov/documents/LeadMit\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.hrc.ri.gov/documents/LeadMit_Brochure.pdf)

*Reducing Lead Hazards When Remodeling Your Home*

[www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrpamph.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/lead/pubs/rrpamph.pdf)

This publication is a joint project of the RI Housing Resources Commission, RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, Providence Preservation Society Revolving Fund, RI Lead Techs, and RI Housing.

