

ISSUE BACKGROUND

VOLUME 14 ▲ NUMBER 1 ▲ MARCH 2006

NPCA's Lead Exposure Warnings, Education and Training Program Meets Success in Year Two and Charges Ahead

Lead dust, not only from the chipping of old lead-based paint, but also from the improper “dry” scraping of intact, old lead-based paint in the renovation of dwellings, poses a health hazard to children. Nationally, childhood lead poisoning continues to be a problem, and the public health community, building on some real success stories, continues to work to eliminate the disease. As a direct result of these efforts, the number of children with elevated blood lead levels has dropped dramatically during the past two decades. This is an extremely important fact because it has been accomplished even while the definition of lead poisoning (including the “warning” and “action” levels for the presence of lead in a child’s blood) has been tightened over the same period of time.

On May 12, 2003, the National Paint and Coatings Association (NPCA) announced an agreement with the nation’s state attorneys general that established a national program of consumer paint product warnings, point-of-sale information and education, and *free* training to avoid the potential exposure to lead-dust during the remodeling or renovation of buildings that may contain old lead-based paint. The progressive Lead Exposure Warnings and Education and Training Programs Agreement between some 50 state Attorneys General and NPCA — a Washington, D.C. trade association that represents manufacturers that produce over 90 percent of U.S. consumer paints — is emblematic of the U.S. paint industry’s longstanding commitment to constructively address the problem of childhood lead poisoning.

This *Issue Backgrounder* explores NPCA’s leadership in carrying out the terms of the agreement, and specifically focuses on the success, to date, of its lead-safe training program activities.

NPCA'S PROACTIVE HISTORY

Consumer paints have not contained lead since it was banned by federal regulation in 1978 in carrying out the NPCA-supported federal law that passed in 1970. In practice, paint manufacturers either stopped using lead altogether by the early 1950s or had reduced its use to a very low level recommended as safe by the American Academy of Pediatrics in 1954-55 through that group’s sponsorship of a consensus standard set by the American Standards Association.

Since the early 1960s, NPCA has produced and broadly distributed public information education in English and Spanish designed to help consumers identify potential lead hazards in their homes and use proper techniques to avoid harm.

NPCA was involved in two presidential lead task forces (under Presidents George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton) and contributed valuable input to the bellwether Maryland Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention commission in the early 1990s, leading to passage of comprehensive lead poisoning prevention legislation in Maryland. NPCA actively promotes state model legislation throughout the nation that has been authored and recommended by that commission’s chairman, former Dean and now Professor Donald Gifford of the University of Maryland School of Law. The model bill is based on the positive results of the Maryland law’s approach, which gives practical incentives for landlords to keep housing stock lead-safe and relies on vigorous enforcement of prescribed duties.

In the early 1990s, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued findings that stated, while lead levels of the vast majority of Americans were now safe, pockets of Americans living in older, ill-maintained housing were still at risk. Thus, in

NPCA's Lead Exposure Warnings, Education and Training Program Meets Success in Year Two and Charges Ahead

1995, NPCA partnered with the non-profit Shriver Center at the University of Maryland Baltimore County to start CLEARCorps, the Community Lead Education and Reduction Corp. CLEARCorps has since evolved, operating in 12 U.S. cities and has received national recognition for its innovative (“targeted, feasible, and effective”) work helping children in such ill-maintained housing avoid lead exposure.

The agreement between the state attorneys general and NPCA is the latest demonstration by the association of its spirited outreach efforts to warn consumers of the hazards of old lead-based paint that is not properly maintained or allowed to fall into disrepair.

YEAR TWO: THE STATISTICS

Sept. 30, 2005 marked the end of the second year of activities under the four-year agreement between the State Attorneys General and NPCA. Included were revised product labels, sticker warnings, and point-of-sale information to alert consumers on the proper precautions to take when doing renovation and remodeling projects where old, lead-based paint is found. For both the first and second year, all critical programs and set targets were met. According to the annual compliance report for state attorneys

general as required under the agreement, total compliance cost to the industry was computed at \$22 million for the second year, compared to \$26 million in its initial year. Here are the facts and figures:

Some 536 million gallons of consumer paints were “stickered” with a special “lead surface preparation warning” in a 19-month sticker program ending in Spring 2005. All consumer paints, including small containers, were labeled with agreement-specified warnings, totaling 630 million gallons. As of Dec. 31, 2004, under the terms of the agreement, labeling conformity necessitated new labels, even for products that had included a lead surface preparation warning (and reference to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Lead Hotline) prior to the start of the agreement. New labeling was required for small containers (less than one quart for non-aerosols, and less than 24 ounces for aerosols), permitting a shorter version of the required warning.

About 320,000 additional consumer brochures were supplied to augment the nearly four million free consumer information brochures (in English and Spanish) that had been distributed to paint retailers for public offering at the “point of sale.”

RETAILER OUTREACH ON LEAD SAFETY

NPCA — through its national expert training contractor — developed, promoted and delivered over 150 separate training sessions (in English and Spanish) aimed at all 50 states, reaching an audience of nearly 3,800 contractors, property managers, housing officials, public health specialists, and the general public. This brings the two-year total to some 7,500 participants in the training offered in English and Spanish in 312 classes delivered throughout the nation.

The program, underwritten by NPCA on behalf of the paint industry, offers free, full-day training seminars, administered by NPCA’s training contractor, MasiMax Environmental Health & Safety Services. The program is based on the latest U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and EPA curriculum, supplemented with specific requirements for states in which they are conducted. A DVD, highlighting key concepts of the full-day training

“... revised product labels, sticker warnings, and point-of-sale information...”

sessions, was utilized to promote training class sponsorship by state agencies and other interested parties and made available to them, as well as to NPCA members.

As part of the program, contractors attending the courses who wish to take a test at the end of the day's training can do so in order to receive a "certificate of completion" (**not** a state-certification) enabling them to undertake federally funded projects. Over 85 percent of participants passed a voluntary exam at the course conclusion to gain this "certificate of completion." Participation in the seminar also features the benefits of the discount equipment program (e.g., NIOSH respirators; HEPA vacuums), another required element under the agreement.

The tuition-free seminars thus far have been exceedingly successful, with a range of attendees — mostly painting contractors and painters, city employees from health and housing agencies, job corps lead-rehabilitation workers from inner cities — and have garnered much goodwill with government agencies.

Additional online and direct training resources were developed for retailers, to increase awareness of lead-based paint hazards and lead safe work practices. This program was launched in September 2003 to help retailer sales staff understand the

nature of lead-based paint hazards and the need for safe work practices. The training program (which can be found at <http://www.leadtraining.org/npca/> in both English and Spanish) offers a short series of training sessions and a computer based algorithm designed to reinforce key concepts on lead-based paint. The online version allows those taking the course to register and complete a questionnaire providing evidence of successful completion of the training.

Throughout 2005 and 2006, NPCA has promoted the availability of the online training program to retailer organizations. While the training program was developed for easy online presentation, many retailers indicated that Internet access at retail sales locations was limited, which worked against it reliably being administered to employees during working hours. To provide an alternate to the online training, NPCA developed a portable electronic format (minidisk) that would be executable on any type of computer equipped with a CD-ROM drive.

NPCA continues to oversee the promotion and distribution of the training program, with the goal of optimizing awareness and utilization by paint retailers in furtherance of the association and industry's commitment to lead education and safety. To bolster retailer participation in the training program, NPCA has sought

to involve federal, state and local partners in the distribution of the minidisk. Already Region IX of EPA (through the Los Angeles Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program), Alameda County California Lead Program, and the Wisconsin Department of Health have embraced the program or will be distributing it through their affiliates.

NPCA has added a recent enhancement to the retailer component of the agreement. This effort, which will be undertaken by Atrium Environmental Health and Safety Services, Inc., will develop a web site for retail organizations to download lead information and receive updates on educational opportunities for their staff and critical customer groups; create a newsletter for distribution by NPCA members and retailer organizations showcasing the benefits of lead safe work practices and training; and develop a new, short (one-hour) training program for use at retail sales locations, which can be delivered in concert with local officials or NPCA trainers. These enhancements are a natural outgrowth of the continued interest in lead safety, and serve to bolster industry efforts under the agreement.

LOOKING AHEAD

In its third year, NPCA will help assure that all labeling remains in conformance with the agreement. It will also ensure that

NPCA's Lead Exposure Warnings, Education and Training Program Meets Success in Year Two and Charges Ahead

the national training program continues to present multiple classes in each state and D.C., focusing special attention on states with sparse populations where the concentration of trainees has proven difficult in the first two years, and continuing its Spanish training network outreach. NPCA will accelerate advocacy and association partnerships and refinement of online and diskette training tools to make sure that retail outlets and their clerks are in the best position to impart lead hazard instructions and are, at a minimum, familiar with the substance of the consumer information booklets being distributed by manufacturers to them for display and consumer assistance.

Despite the continued accomplishments in year two of the four year agreement, some significant challenges remain. The most pressing of these challenges is to increase retailer support for the initiative, including distribution of point-of-sale information and participation in the on-line lead safe work practices training.

NPCA will again monitor ongoing efforts under the national lead-safe work practices training program, which is again expected to reach all 50 states, offer a minimum of 150 sessions and train some 3,750 persons. In 2006, to enhance the continued efforts by consumer paint manufacturers to provide ongoing support for the distribution of "point-of-sale" information, new tools and information resources will be available to encourage retailer organizations to participate in the public outreach effort. NPCA also hopes to engage several new strategic partners in bolstering the outreach efforts, including the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America and the Paint and Decorating Retailers Association, in an effort to reach both paint and decorating retailers and contractors. In addition, NPCA will seek to include more local health agencies to raise awareness of this important program in the fight against childhood lead poisoning. NPCA has asked that these groups assist in

promoting the training seminars and publicize the *www.leadsafetraining.org* site, which maintains an updated calendar of upcoming training sessions around the United States as the dates and locations are secured. NPCA will persist in its campaign to reach those who need the education to maximize the message of lead-safe work practices.

NPCA and its members continue to place the highest priority on meeting all aspects of the agreement, identifying and correcting programmatic deficiencies, and striving for continuous improvement, creative innovations; and partnerships agreement to help the nation meet its goal of eliminating childhood lead poisoning by the year 2010.

For more information on NPCA's Lead Exposure Warnings and Education and Training Programs, contact NPCA's Vice President of Environmental, Health and International Affairs, Steve Sides (*ssides@paint.org*), or visit <http://leadsafetraining.org>.

NPCA

NPCA is a voluntary nonprofit trade association representing some 400 paint and coatings manufacturers, raw materials suppliers and distributors. As the preeminent organization representing the paint and coatings industry in the United States, NPCA's primary role is to serve as ally and advocate on legislative, regulatory, and judicial issues at the federal, state and local levels. In addition, NPCA provides members with such services as research and technical information, statistical management information, legal guidance, and community service project support.

