

CALGARY MOLD REMEDIATION

Lead Paint

Health Canada's year bands, testing, why sanding and heat guns are out, stripping and encapsulation, and disposal

4 Expert Answers from Remediation IQ

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Q1

Does lead paint affect selling a Calgary home?

We found no Alberta or City of Calgary rule that requires you to test for lead paint or remove it before listing a property.

What the rules actually say

Health Canada's guidance is straightforward on age: a home built before 1960 probably contains lead-based paint; one built between 1960 and 1990 may have it on the exterior; one built after 1990 should not contain it.

Health Canada's concern is disturbing the paint: it advises against sanding, heat guns and blowlamps because they create toxic dust and fumes.

If you or a buyer plan any renovation, do not sand, use a heat gun or a blowtorch on painted surfaces in a pre-1990 home. Health Canada's options are: hire a professional, use a chemical paint stripper paste, or cover the surface with wallboard, wallpaper or panelling.

A few things that shape how lead paint affects a sale in practice:

- Testing is done by lab analysis of paint chips or by a contractor with x-ray fluorescence equipment.
- If a renovation is part of the transaction, the contractor working in the home is bound by Alberta OHS Code sections 41 to 43: an exposure control plan is required when a worker may exceed the lead exposure limit of 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre for more than 30 days a year, along with air and surface monitoring and blood-lead testing made available at the employer's cost.
- The City of Calgary's Asbestos Abatement Information Form is required before a building or demolition permit is released for pre-1990 structures; that form covers asbestos, not lead, but a pre-renovation survey for a pre-1990 home may address both.

For disposal, Health Canada says lead paint scrapings must be disposed of according to the municipality's instructions. We found no specific City of Calgary rule for lead paint waste, so check with the City before disposing of any painted debris.

No Alberta or City rebate or grant for lead paint testing or removal was found; do not expect one.

If renovation is part of the plan, the first call is to the City of Calgary's building permit office, to find out what that scope needs. A contractor can then tell you what testing and work the specific scope requires.

Q2

Peeling paint on a 1940s Calgary bungalow, lead risk?

A home built in the 1940s probably contains lead-based paint. Health Canada states that a home built before 1960 probably contains lead-based paint, so a 1940s Calgary bungalow falls squarely in that band.

Health Canada advises against sanding lead paint and against heat guns or blowlamps, because they create toxic dust and fumes. The safer options are a chemical paint stripper paste applied carefully, encapsulation by covering the surface with wallpaper, wallboard or panelling, or hiring a professional to remove it.

What testing and removal look like

Testing is done by lab analysis of paint chips or by a contractor using x-ray fluorescence equipment. For scrapings and debris, Health Canada says to use a sealed container marked hazardous waste and to follow your municipality's disposal instructions. The City has no specific published rule for lead paint waste that this site has found, so contact the City directly before disposing of anything. For removal, no usable published Calgary price range exists for lead paint work, so get written quotes from at least two contractors. Any prepaid contract of \$200 or more must be in writing under Alberta consumer protection rules, and must include names and addresses, a detailed description of the work, itemized prices, a completion date and a statement of your cancellation rights.

When you speak to a contractor, ask:

- Whether they will do air and surface monitoring, since the Alberta OHS Code requires an exposure control plan for workers who may exceed the lead exposure limit of 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre for more than 30 days a year, and blood-lead testing made available at the employer's cost.
- Whether they carry liability insurance and have a WCB clearance letter showing their account is in good standing; you can request that letter yourself through WCB-Alberta's online system.
- Whether the quote includes post-work cleanup and how they plan to contain dust during the job.

If the paint has already been disturbed, stop the work right now, leave the area, keep others and pets out, close the door, and do not sweep or vacuum the debris. Have the paint tested before anyone goes back to work.

The form on this page reaches contractors in the Calgary Construction Network directory; put these three questions to each of them.

Q3

What should I ask a Calgary contractor about lead paint removal?

Lead paint is a real concern in Calgary homes built before 1960, and Health Canada says it may also appear on exterior surfaces of homes built between 1960 and 1990. Before you hire anyone, knowing the right questions will protect both your health and your budget.

What to ask before signing anything

Start with how they plan to confirm lead is actually present. A contractor should either send paint chip samples to a lab for analysis or use x-ray fluorescence equipment on site. Ask which method they use and whether you get a written report with the results before any removal begins.

Then ask about the work itself. Health Canada is clear that sanding, heat guns and blowlamps are not acceptable methods for lead paint removal. Ask the contractor which method they intend to use: chemical stripper paste, encapsulation with wallboard or panelling, or full removal. If they propose sanding or heat stripping, that is a problem.

Ask about worker protection and air monitoring. The Alberta OHS Code sets an occupational exposure limit for lead of 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre. If any worker may exceed that limit for more than 30 days a year, the Code requires an exposure control plan, air and surface monitoring, and blood-lead testing made available at the employer's cost. Ask the contractor whether they will be doing air monitoring during the work and what records they keep.

Ask about containment and cleanup. Ask how they will contain the work zone, how they will clean surfaces after the job, and whether they will do any post-work testing to confirm lead levels are acceptable before you re-occupy the space.

Ask about waste disposal. Health Canada says lead paint scrapings go in a sealed container marked as hazardous waste and are disposed of according to your municipality's instructions. Ask the contractor how they handle and dispose of the waste, and whether that cost is included in the quote.

A few other things worth checking:

- Ask to see proof of liability and property damage insurance, a WCB clearance letter confirming the contractor has an account in good standing, and any written documentation of worker training.
- If the contractor asks for any payment before the work is finished, they are operating as a prepaid contracting business and must be licensed with Service Alberta. A prepaid contract of \$200 or more must be in writing and include a detailed description of the work, itemized prices, a completion date and your cancellation rights. You can verify their licence through Service Alberta's licensed-business search.
- No published Calgary-area price range exists for lead paint removal that is reliable enough to quote here, so get at least two written quotes and compare what each one includes.

Before you sign, ask the contractor to spell out in writing exactly what the quote covers for containment, post-work testing and waste disposal, so nothing is left off the price.

The request form on this page reaches contractors listed in the Calgary Construction Network directory, and these questions work for every one of them.

Could the exterior of a 1970s Alberta home have lead paint?

Yes, it could. Health Canada says a home built between 1960 and 1990 may contain lead-based paint on the exterior, so a 1970s Alberta home falls squarely in that band.

The exterior surfaces most worth checking are any that show peeling, chalking or flaking paint, because damaged paint is what any work would disturb first. Health Canada is clear that sanding, heat guns and blowlamps should never be used on surfaces that may contain lead paint.

How to confirm it

Two methods are published. A contractor with X-ray fluorescence equipment can test painted surfaces without disturbing them. Alternatively, a lab can analyse paint chip samples. We found no published Calgary price for lead paint testing, so ask for a written quote.

If testing confirms lead paint, your options are to hire a professional for removal, use a chemical paint stripper paste that avoids dust, or cover it; Health Canada lists wallpaper, wallboard or panelling for interiors, and on an exterior the same idea means covering the old paint rather than disturbing it. Health Canada says to dispose of lead scrapings and debris according to your municipality's instructions. We found no specific City of Calgary rule for lead paint waste, so check the City's instructions before disposing of any material.

A few things to sort out before hiring anyone:

- Ask to see the contractor's WCB clearance letter confirming their account is in good standing; without it, you could be liable for unpaid premiums.
- Ask for a certificate of liability and property damage insurance.
- Under Alberta consumer protection rules, a prepaid contract of \$200 or more must be in writing and include itemized prices, a completion date and your cancellation rights.
- The Alberta OHS Code sets a worker exposure limit for lead of 0.05 milligrams per cubic metre and requires the contractor to have an exposure control plan if workers may exceed it for more than 30 days a year.

If the exterior paint has already been disturbed, stop the work right now, keep people and pets away from the area, do not sweep or vacuum any dust or chips, and have the material tested before anyone goes back to that part of the house.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Calgary Mold Remediation. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority (the City of Calgary or your own municipality) and Alberta Occupational Health and Safety before starting any asbestos, mould or lead paint project.

Information is current as of October 25, 2026 and may change. Visit calgarymoldremediation.com for the latest answers.