

3.5.4 Removal or disturbance of lead paint

The removal or disturbance of lead paint has the greatest potential to generate dust and waste and will therefore invoke appropriate containment and ventilation control measures, as well as safe work practices. The removal of hazardous paint will also provide challenges with regards to the management of the resultant waste (see Section 7). Practices recommended for the removal of lead paint, which are both effective means of surface preparation, and minimize the quantity of dust generated, include the following:

- (a) *Wet scraping and wet sanding* These are among the safest practices for the removal of lead paint.

Wet scraping and wet sanding involves moistening the paint with water from an atomizing bottle, or similar device, and then removing the paint from the surface using a scraper or a wet abrasive paper. Drop-sheets of thick, impervious plastic are used to catch the waste for collection and disposal. This method generates a minimum of dust. Scraping and sanding can be slow and further cleaning or smoothing may be needed to remove residues or to feather edges. Scraping and sanding may also result in damage of soft substrates such as plaster or softwood. Care should be taken near electrical outlets.

The run-off from wet sanding and scraping will carry suspended particles which should be controlled. Run-off should not be allowed to escape between floor-boards, into or under floor coverings or behind architraves. If run-off is allowed to escape, it may dry out and regenerate lead dust hazards.

- (b) *On-site chemical stripping* Chemical paint strippers will soften and swell the paint, allowing it to be easily removed with a scraper. The residue is usually a gel-like paste that is easily contained and handled. Chemical stripping is suitable for most surfaces such as timber, render or steel.

NOTE: Residue from the chemical stripping process including lead may penetrate the substrate and create a hazardous surface. If further sanding is required this may result in generation of airborne lead dust.

Some waterborne strippers are caustic and might require skin, face and eye protection during use, as well as protection of non-target surfaces. Some chemical strippers contain flammable or hazardous volatile solvents. Some chemical strippers may cause damage to certain substrates and should be tested for compatibility before use. Waste from chemical strippers should be collected and prevented from entering the sewer or stormwater drains.

- (c) *Off-site chemical stripping* This involves removing components and shipping them to a paint stripping establishment where they are immersed in baths of chemicals. The paint residue is retained at the establishment for controlled disposal, and the stripped components are then returned to the site for re-installation.

NOTE: Residue from the chemical stripping process including lead may penetrate the substrate and create a hazardous surface. If further sanding is required this may result in generation of airborne lead dust.

Care needs to be exercised when adopting some immersion-type chemical stripping processes as the technique may be inappropriate for some component materials which could be damaged or suffer a shortened life.

Some dust may be generated when the component is removed from the building and appropriate safe working methods should be employed. Dust may also be released from voids in the building when components are removed.