

# National Paint, Varnish and Lacquer Association

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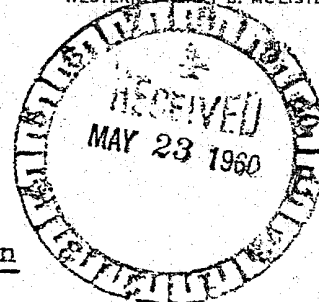
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May 16, 1960

*Send to Phil and Gayle*  
TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS:



## Baltimore's Paint-Up Campaign

The enclosed article describing the joint campaign of the Baltimore Health Department and the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency to remove old, flaking paint from substandard dwellings and replace it with new, safe paint, stresses the need for more education on hygiene in the home.

Dr. Huntington Williams, the Commissioner of Health of Baltimore, has given us permission to reproduce this article, which demonstrates that warning labels alone do not prevent uninformed persons from using lead paint on the interiors of dwellings.

The Baltimore authorities, nevertheless, insist that the following warning appear as a separate label on all containers of paints with more than 1% lead:

"WARNING - Contains lead. Harmful if eaten. Do not apply on any interior surfaces of a dwelling, or of a place used for the care of children, or on window sills, toys, cribs or other furniture."

Also attached is a copy of an informative talk by Dan Ring, our General Counsel, on "How Labeling Legislation Affects the Paint Industry". You will find it helpful.

Sincerely yours,

*Joseph F. Battle*  
President

JFB:ew

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## True Prevention Lead Paint Poisoning

A new and truly preventive program aimed at keeping teething age children from becoming ill with lead paint poisoning was inaugurated by the City Health Department on December 16, 1959 when the Commissioner of Health visited the home of a child registered at a well baby clinic in the Druid Health District building and took paint samples from the window sills and elsewhere in the home. The new element added to this 30 year program is to discover and get the lead paint out of these homes of susceptible children before they get sick, rather than afterwards. Accompanying the Commissioner of Health on December 16 were Dr. H. Maceo Williams, the District Health Officer, Mr. George W. Schucker, Assistant Commissioner of Health for Sanitation, Mr. Francis J. Goldsmith, Senior Sanitarian and Mr. William Sallow, Chief of the Inspection and Code Enforcement Section of the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency.

### Interdepartmental Teamwork

Since 1931 when the City Health Department first began to keep records of lead paint poisoning in children 800 Baltimore children have been known to have suffered from lead paint poisoning and 124 of them have died. Ten of them died in one single year, 1958. Studies have shown that a large percentage of these cases occurred in "lead alley", especially that part of it in the Druid Health District, and it is for this reason that the Druid area was selected as a starting point in the new preventive program. Before the drive began the home inspection details were carefully worked out on a team basis between the staffs of the City Health Department, the Multiple Housing Division of the Bureau of Building Inspection and the Inspection and Code Enforcement Section of the Baltimore Urban Renewal and Housing Agency.

Concentrating for the present on the Druid Health District well baby clinic children approximately one year of age, Health Department sanitarians and Urban Renewal inspectors are visiting homes, making known the lead paint hazard to the parents, and obtaining samples of paint for lead determination. When homes are found positive for lead, Health Department orders are being issued for the removal of the paint as legally authorized by Baltimore's Ordinance on the Hygiene of Housing. Approximately 250 homes are being visited initially. Following this about 15 homes a week will be tested on a continuing basis. Thus for the first time, the teething age children will be separated from the lead paint poison hazard before they get sick or die. This new preventive work supplements the existing Health Department lead paint control efforts carried on jointly in routine field visits by public health nurses, sanitarians, multiple dwelling inspectors from the Bureau of Building Inspection and Urban Renewal staff members during inspections and home visits.

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In the first home visited on December 16, 1959, a total of 26 samples of paint was collected. The laboratory analyses disclosed that 16 of these paint samples were positive for lead. Lead paint was present on the window sills and some of the baseboards and walls. Prompt removal of the lead paint was ordered as a safety measure.

#### More Education Needed - An Example

In spite of more than twenty-five years of effort on the part of the City Health Department to acquaint the community with the hazard presented by lead paint in dwellings, much more public education is needed. This was made strongly evident at the time of the first home visit on December 16. In one of the apartments in the building a tenant was painting the apartment to brighten it up for the Christmas season. A quick examination of the paint can in used showed a large warning label on the lid of the can, as required by city ordinance, which stated that the paint contained lead and was not to be used for interior painting. The presence of lead in the paint was also indicated in two other places on the main label of the can.

The Baltimore City Health Department has pursued with vigor its attempts to control lead paint poisoning in children. The press, radio and television have informed the public incessantly of the danger. Letters have been sent to paint dealers and manufacturers. The city ordinance requiring the labeling of lead paint has been in force since July 9, 1958 and a Health Department regulation prohibiting the use of lead paint on the interior of dwellings in Baltimore was adopted in 1951. All of these measures together have so far failed to bring this dangerous affliction of teething age children under control.

#### Community Cooperation Necessary

The new program is designed to add one more weapon in the fight against lead paint poisoning. However, it must be remembered that "lead alley", the area where most of the cases occur, may contain 25,000 homes or more. Even with the efforts of all enforcement agencies, the removal of the last lead paint from the interiors of Baltimore's dwellings will not be achieved in the next few years. In the meanwhile, the cooperative efforts of all elements of the community will be needed in order to eradicate this health hazard within a reasonable time.

Paint manufacturers will need to make available the widest possible selection of paints free of lead pigment. Paint dealers or general store agents will be expected to be sure all their lead paint carries the warning label as required by city ordinance, to question customers concerning the proposed use of the paints they

purchase and sell only lead free paints for interior use. Home owners, occupants and painters it is hoped will check the labels of the paints they apply inside dwellings to be certain that they contain no lead. Mothers will need to be more careful in watching their small children to see that they do not eat paint, in the same way that they guard them from dashing into a busy street or playing with matches. If children are observed cutting their teeth by chewing at a window sill or swallowing even a small amount of paint the parents will do well to take them to the family doctor or clinic without delay. The lead paint poisoning menace can be overcome if each person learns to do his part in preventing it.

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