

January 16, 1942.

United Safety Service,
180 N. Wacker Drive,
Chicago, Illinois.

Attention: R. H. Porter, Editor

Gentlemen:

In your January 1942 issue of "THE SAFE FOREMAN" appears an article on page 10 titled "Lead Poisoning". There are several statements in that article that should be clarified. The statements to which I refer are quoted below:

"Think of freshly applied paint on a wall giving off fumes. This may contain lead and in the fumes some of the lead is traveling through the air. Without ventilation to keep the air fresh the lead can reach the lungs and thus settle in the body."

While it may not have been the intention of the author to imply that all paint contains lead, still the first statement quoted above gives the suggestion to the reader that all paint applied on a wall contains lead. It may be that my interpretation is a bit critical but I believe there is room for improvement in the statement.

The statement that the paint may contain lead and in the fumes some of the lead is traveling through the air, is certainly open to question. I am quite sure that there has been no outstanding research that has produced evidence that paint fumes contain lead although the paint from which the fumes originate may contain a high percentage of lead pigments. If you have evidence that such is the case, I certainly would be glad to obtain the information. The fumes from drying paint may contain volatile products that are offensive to some people, but never have I found any evidence that these fumes contain metal compounds from the paints.

We full realize the danger from lead poisoning and it is part of our policy to publicize to our employees and our customers the safety measures necessary in handling lead compounds. We are anxious, however, to make certain that our instructions are in accordance with the facts. We try never to exaggerate the dangers, neither do we want to minimize them. We have seen quite a number of examples of erroneous diagnoses on the part of physicians because of their unfamiliarity with the true symptoms of lead poisoning and their assumption that all paints are potential dangers because of lead compounds. Fortunately, there are several very definite methods of testing today that eliminate all guess-work in the diagnosis of lead poisoning.

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Your comments will be very much appreciated. We feel that paint has had an unusual amount of unfavorable publicity along the lines of lead poisoning from the medical profession through unfamiliarity with the facts. We are satisfied that this is an unintentional condition.

Yours very truly,

THE LOWE BROTHERS COMPANY

L. W. Pasig

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