

William Burke

City of Chicago Building Department

For an effective lead poisoning prevention program, close cooperation between a number of both public and private agencies is necessary. The Board of Health and the Building or Housing Department need to work jointly to provide the various services to the community at risk. Since the problem of lead poisoning is as much an environmental problem as a medical one, this dual responsibility is mandatory.

Building Department inspectors should be cognizant of the fact that a paint chip the size of a dime, ingested daily for two to three months, is more than enough to cause lead poisoning. The need for taking samples is being greatly reduced by the use of x-ray fluorescence analyzers. These are portable, non-destructive testing units that give an immediate reading in milligrams per square centimeter. X-ray fluorescence analyzers have been in use for screening for over a year in a number of cities with good results.

The system for dwelling unit inspection will depend on the resources available in the community. A comprehensive data collection mechanism should be developed, aimed at gathering relevant information about the specific dwelling unit and its occupants. The location of hazardous lead paint should be detailed, and if necessary, samples should be obtained for analysis and possible use for litigation purposes.

Details for deleading should be worked out. Voluntary compliance is probably ideal, but often additional steps to assure prompt deleading become necessary. A number of municipalities have created

ordinances aimed at forcing landlords to have dwelling units in which small children live made safe. Some communities have developed deleading teams, employing inner city youth for the work, utilizing model city funds.

There are a variety of methods used to delead a dwelling unit. Basically, the hazardous painted surfaces need to be covered or removed. The cost of deleading varies, but most place the figure between \$11,000 and \$12,500 per dwelling unit.