

# GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

## Department of Energy and Environment

### Lead and Healthy Housing Division

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#### District implements CDC-funded lead screening initiative

Under a new cooperative agreement with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Department of Energy and Environment has initiated a three-year project to improve the rate at which children living in the District of Columbia are getting screened for possible lead exposure, at the ages required by District law. As is true in many other jurisdictions across the United States, the District of Columbia requires all children who are residents of the nation's capital to get screened twice by the time they are two years old -- once between the ages of 6 and 14 months, and a second time between the ages of 22 and 26 months.

To help implement this initiative, the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) funded three grant recipients, one of which is the Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health and the Environment (MACCHE), a District-based organization that is reaching out to pediatricians and their staff to stress the importance of screening children "twice by two," in accordance with District law. Pursuant to its grant agreement, MACCHE, an organization federally recognized as a regional Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, has produced online modules on lead exposure and lead screening which include continuing education credits for medical professionals.

A second DOEE grant went to the Ethiopian

Community Center Inc. (ECC), an organization that reaches out to and informs the District's numerous Amharic-speaking residents. The ECC has organized outreach events at which they spread the message about the importance of screening children for lead at age-appropriate times. The ECC is also incorporating these messages in English as a Second Language classes.

The third DOEE grantee is the National Nursing Centers Consortium's District office, known as Lead Safe DC. This organization is working closely with the ECC and with the District's Managed Care Organizations to help staff health fairs and other District events where lead screening occurs. In the process, Lead Safe DC staff are educating parents about the hazards of lead and providing them with cleaning supplies to help minimize the risk of exposure to leaded dust.

The goal of this collaborative effort to increase lead screening in the District of Columbia is to ensure all children are living in lead-safe housing. The results of the effort are promising: with roughly one month remaining in the current fiscal year (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015), DOEE expects to see an increased number of District children screened, above and beyond last fiscal year's number.



#### Helpful Links

Screening-Related District Documents: <http://doee.dc.gov/publication/lead-screening-guidelines>

District Lead Law Documents: <http://doee.dc.gov/publication/2013-lead-regulations-finalized>

## Data-sharing agreements producing results

The Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) has established important Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with two key District agencies: the Department of Health Care Finance (DHCF) and the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Pursuant to these MOUs, data are provided by DHCF and DCPS to DOEE, which then is able to identify children under six years old who have not yet been screened for potential lead exposure. District law requires any child who has not been screened twice by two, to be screened twice by age six years.

So far in 2015, DOEE has worked in close partnership with the District's four Managed Care Organizations (MCOs), as encouraged by DHCF, and has provided screening staff at five health fairs the MCOs organized during the year to date. As a result, **187 children, who otherwise would not have been screened, have been screened for lead exposure**.

Similarly, DOEE has worked in close partnership with the DCPS Early Childhood Education program, through which several District public schools have collaborated with DOEE to ensure that children get screened at the schools themselves. This effort has involved getting parents to sign Consent Forms allowing DOEE staff to screen their children, then setting up dates and times at the participating schools for DOEE to conduct these screenings. So far, **this collaboration has succeeded in getting 45 children screened who otherwise would not have been**.

These DOEE partnerships are important ways that the District Government is working as one to ensure all District residents live in lead safety.

## The DC Partnership for Healthy Homes

Every year in the District of Columbia, thousands of children suffer from serious health problems caused or worsened by environmental health hazards. In response to these threats, DOEE launched the DC Partnership for Healthy Homes, an award-winning program aimed at identifying and ending health threats in the homes of DC families. The Partnership, spearheaded by DOEE's Lead and Healthy Housing Division, consists of a broad coalition of District agencies, Managed Care Organizations, and some of the District's most prominent medical providers, non-profits, and environmental health professionals.

### How it Works

Participating health providers and social service agencies serve as front-line responders, identifying children in distress due to uncontrolled asthma, and/or situations in which a pregnant woman or a child is living in a hazardous home. After an intake process, participants typically receive a comprehensive home environmental

## District's lead enforcement efforts paying off

District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) data show promising results in terms of the remarkable recent decline in children newly identified as lead poisoned. This encouraging progress can probably be attributed to a number of factors, such as the ongoing work by the Department of Housing and Community Development's lead hazard reduction grant program. However, the pattern of progress is most closely linked with the enactment and enforcement of the District's landmark lead law, the Lead-Hazard Prevention and Elimination Act, which first entered into force at the end of March, 2009.

The District's lead law ("the Act") includes several key requirements:

- Property owners are required to maintain residential properties free of lead-based paint hazards;
- DOEE is empowered with broad enforcement authority;
- The District's housing code enforcement agency (Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs) is named as co-enforcer with DOEE;
- Individuals who work on housing built before 1978 (including plumbers, electricians, and others in the building trades) must use lead-safe work practices when disturbing painted surfaces;
- Landlords must give their tenants a DOEE-produced Tenant Rights Form, which details the rights of tenants under the Act; and
- One of the rights of tenant households containing a child under six years old or a pregnant woman is the right to obtain proof from their landlord of their pre-1978 home's lead safety.

DOEE's lead enforcement staff is in the field every day, conducting compliance assistance and enforcement. In 2014, DOEE's lead enforcement staff received authority to penalize non-compliance with fines. These and other efforts to inform the regulated communities of their responsibilities under the Act are no doubt contributing significantly to the remarkable decline in blood lead levels in recent years in the nation's capital.

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assessment and energy audit, family education, and where appropriate, an asthma management diagnostic and case management coordination. DOEE case managers then create a report documenting identified hazards and work with sister agencies and the property owner to ensure hazard remediation occurs quickly. A survey of 187 cases since 2013 shows a measurable increase in asthma control for participants, as measured by the National Institute of Health supported "Asthma Control Test."

## District numbers looking promising

District of Columbia screening data over the seven most recent fiscal years (October 1, 2007 through September 30, 2014) reveal a remarkable decline in the number of children getting identified each year as lead poisoned. The two tables below show the striking, year-to-year details. One caveat: as the District continues its efforts to increase the number of children getting screened each year, it is likely that the number of children found with too much lead in their blood will increase as well. But overall, these data demonstrate that the District of Columbia is on track to eliminate childhood lead poisoning in the nation's capital.

Table 1. Number of Children Less Than 72 Months of Age With a Reported Blood Lead Level Screening or Test Result, District of Columbia, Fiscal Years (FY) 2008 - 2014 <sup>1</sup>							
Age Group	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
0-71 Months	14,297	15,440	15,913	15,266	16,871	15,309	16,206
0-23 Months	6,256	6,596	6,734	6,623	7,538	6,852	7,034
24 – 35 Months	3,699	3,995	4,246	4,112	4,423	4,483	5,279
36 – 71 Months	4,342	4,849	4,933	4,531	4,910	3,974	3,893

<sup>1</sup> Sorted by age of child at child's first reported blood lead level result during a given fiscal year.

Table 2. Reported Blood Lead Level Results for Children Less Than 72 Months of Age, District of Columbia, Fiscal Years (FY) 2008 – 2014 <sup>2</sup>							
Blood lead levels	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14
0 – 4.9 µg/dL	13,584	14,986	15,502	14,936	16,604	15,128	16,018
5 – 9.9 µg/dL	556	390	336	292	225	156	158
10—14.9 µg/dL	86	38	54	28	26	15	17
15—19.9 µg/dL	32	10	8	5	6	7	7
20 µg/dL or higher	39	16	13	5	10	3	6
10 µg/dL or greater ("high" blood lead levels), and as % of children screened	157 (1.2%)	64 (0.4%)	75 (0.5%)	38 (0.3%)	42 (0.3%)	25 (0.2%)	30 (0.2%)
5 µg/dL or greater, and as % of children screened	713 (5.2%)	454 (3.0%)	411 (2.7%)	330 (2.2%)	267 (1.6%)	181 (1.2%)	188 (1.2%)

<sup>2</sup> Sorted by highest confirmed blood lead level result reported for a given child during a given fiscal year.

## District Department of the Environment is now Department of Energy and Environment

The name of the District Department of the Environment has officially been changed to the **Department of Energy and Environment** as of August 12, 2015, per an official order by Mayor Muriel Bowser. This change reflects the Government of the District of Columbia's dedication to a cleaner, livable environment utilizing cleaner sources of energy and a renewed focus on conservation. The agency continues to be located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of 1200 First St. NE, in Washington, DC. The website address has changed from [ddoe.dc.gov](http://ddoe.dc.gov) to <http://doee.dc.gov>. All website links reflect this change. Please make a note of this information, and we look forward to serving the District as the Department of Energy and Environment.

### Reminder from DOEE to carry certification credentials

Remember that if you're certified by DOEE to do the work, you must carry your DOEE-issued ID card on you whenever you are at a work site, whether you are conducting a risk assessment or a clearance examination, or performing lead abatement activities.

### Tenant rights form reminder

Remember that the District's lead law requires owners of rental properties built before 1978 to give to their tenants a copy of the DOEE-issued Tenant Rights form. The form can be downloaded from DOEE's website, at [doee.dc.gov/publication/tenant-rights-under-districts-lead-law](http://doee.dc.gov/publication/tenant-rights-under-districts-lead-law).

Have a question about the District's lead laws? Check out DOEE's Frequently Asked Questions at [doee.dc.gov/leadsafehealthyhomes](http://doee.dc.gov/leadsafehealthyhomes)



**PROTECT  
YOUR CHILD**  
FROM LEAD POISONING

Lead can be found in dust, on toys,  
in paint, in dirt, and in water.

The only way to know if your child is  
being exposed is to get tested twice,  
by the age of two.

**EVERY CHILD. TWICE BY TWO.**

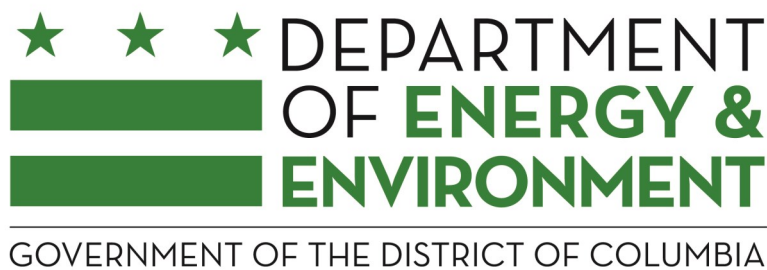
[doee.dc.gov/twicebytwo](http://doee.dc.gov/twicebytwo)

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