

Update on the Global Status of Legal Limits on Lead in Paint September 2019



NEW in the 2019 Global Update

NEW LAWS: Bangladesh and Israel have established new laws to address lead in paint.

NEW TOOL: UN Environment published the fact sheet: [Suggested Steps for Establishing a Lead Paint Law](#), a resource for countries ready to take action to eliminate lead paint. The fact sheet outlines steps which have been helpful in countries that have adopted laws. It is currently available in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese.

NEW MOMENTUM: An increasing number of countries are taking steps to eliminate lead paint. Many of these actions are the result of recent regional workshops on “Promoting Regulatory Action by Governments to Phase out Lead in Paint” held in the African, Central and Eastern European, Latin America and the Caribbean, and West Asia and Asia and Pacific regions under the Strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management (SAICM) Global Environmental Facility (GEF) project on lead paint.

Global Progress Toward Eliminating Lead Paint

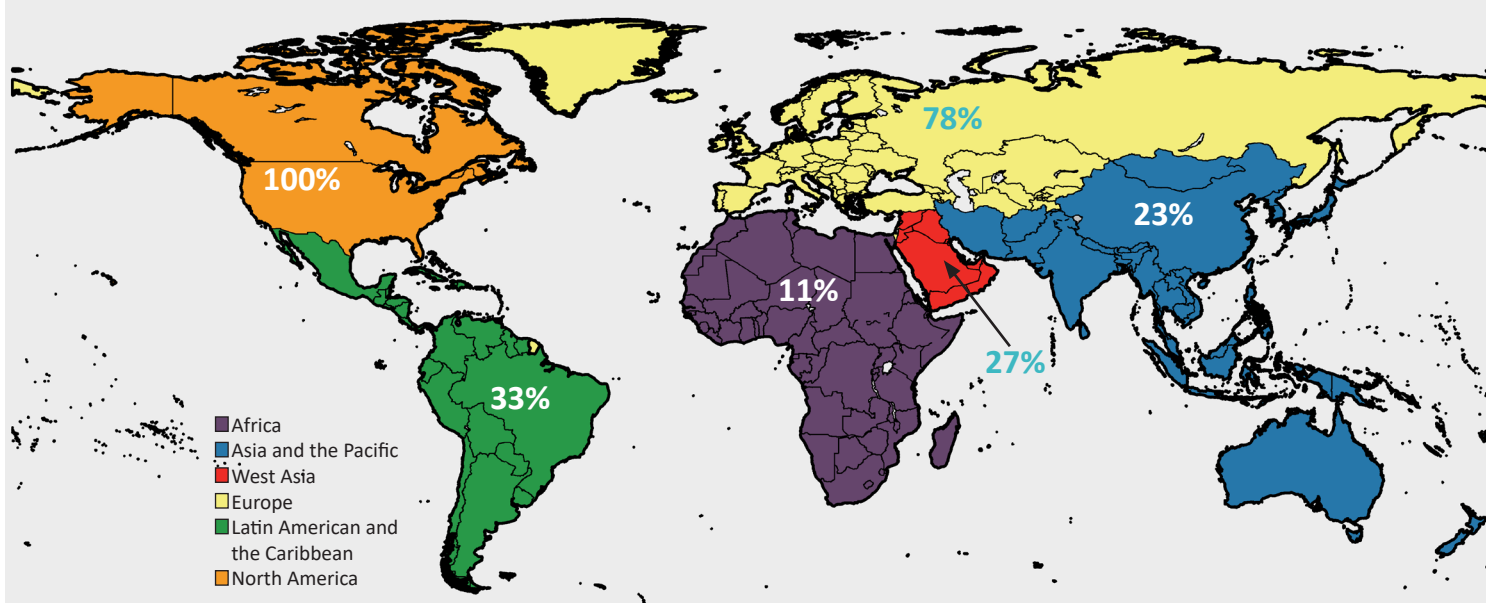
As of 30 September 2019, 73 countries have legally binding controls to limit the production, import and sale of lead paints, which is 38% of all countries. In many countries, using lead paint in homes and schools is not prohibited, creating a significant risk of children’s exposure to lead. The most effective means of preventing lead exposure from paints is to establish national laws, including legislation, regulations and/or legally binding standards as appropriate, that ban the use of lead additives in paints. Countries that have not yet done so are urged to enact and enforce effective national legislation, regulations and/or standards to, at a minimum, stop the manufacture, import and sale of household decorative lead paints. Countries are also encouraged to consider limiting lead in all types of paints.

This update is provided annually by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) in support of the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (Lead Paint Alliance). UN Environment and the World Health Organization (WHO) serve as the joint Secretariat for this international voluntary, collaborative initiative (see Endnote 1). The goal of the Lead Paint Alliance is for all countries to have lead paint laws in place by 2020.

Countries that have only put in place legally binding controls on lead coatings used on children’s toys are not counted toward this Alliance goal. Eliminating lead paint on children’s toys provides only partial protection, since it does not address household decorative paints. Likewise, countries that have only ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) White Lead (Painting) Convention, 1921 (No. 13), which prohibits the use of lead carbonate and lead sulphate in paints, are also not included in this update. Since these lead compounds are no longer widely used in paints, the ILO Convention alone provides little benefit in protecting against lead exposure.

The map below shows the percentage of countries as of September 2019 with lead paint laws within each of the six UN Environment regions (see page 6 for a list of countries by UN Environment region). Table 1, on the following page, lists the specific countries with lead paint laws by region.

Map 1: Percent of Countries with Lead Paint Laws in Each UN Environment Region, as of September 2019



The designations employed and the presentation of material on the maps in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. The depiction and use of boundaries, geographic names and related data shown on maps and included in lists and tables in this document are not warranted to be error free nor do they necessarily imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Unless otherwise noted, all the data in the maps, tables and figures are from WHO: Regulations and controls on lead paint, 30 September 2019 (database) (see Endnote 2).

Table 1: Countries with Confirmed Lead Paint Laws in Each UN Environment Region

Africa	Asia and the Pacific	West Asia	Europe			Latin America and the Caribbean	North America
Algeria Cameroon Ethiopia Kenya South Africa United Republic of Tanzania	Australia Bangladesh* China India Nepal New Zealand Philippines Sri Lanka Thailand	Jordan Iraq Oman	Armenia Austria Belarus Belgium Bulgaria Croatia Cyprus Czech Republic Denmark Estonia Finland France Germany Greece Hungary Iceland Ireland Israel*	Italy Kazakhstan Kyrgyzstan Latvia Liechtenstein Lithuania Luxembourg Malta Monaco Montenegro Netherlands North Macedonia Norway Poland Portugal Romania Russian Federation	Serbia Slovakia Slovenia Spain Sweden Switzerland United Kingdom	Argentina Brazil Chile Costa Rica Cuba Dominica Guyana Mexico Panama Trinidad and Tobago Uruguay	Canada United States of America

*New since 1 October, 2018

Lead Exposure from Paint

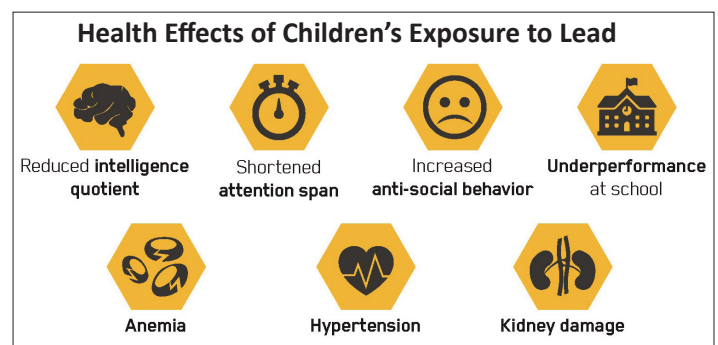
Historically, lead compounds have been added to oil-based decorative and industrial paints and other coatings to enhance colour, reduce corrosion on metal surfaces or shorten drying time. Today, non-lead pigments, driers and anti-corrosive ingredients are widely available for use in most oil-based paints.

After the application of lead paint, weathering, peeling or chipping of the paint releases lead particles into dust and soil in and around homes, schools, playgrounds and other locations. Decorative paint for household use has been identified as the main source of children’s lead exposure from paints. Lead-containing dust can also be brought into the home on the clothes of those who work in industries where such dust is generated, including paint factories where lead additives continue to be used.

Lead-contaminated soil and dust are easily ingested and absorbed, particularly by young children when they play on the floor or outdoors and put their hands or other objects in their mouths. Children also ingest lead if they mouth and chew toys painted with lead paint. Both children and adults can be exposed to lead in paint chips and dust during the removal of old lead paint.

Negative Health Effects from Lead Exposure

There is no known level of lead exposure that is considered safe. Lead can cause permanent damage to the brain and nervous system, resulting in decreased IQ and increased behavioural problems. It can also cause anemia, increase the risk of kidney damage and hypertension, and impair reproductive function. Young children and pregnant women (whose developing fetus can be exposed) are especially vulnerable to the adverse effects of lead. Even relatively low levels of exposure can cause serious and irreversible neurological damage. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation has estimated that, based on 2017 data, lead exposure accounted for 1.06 million deaths from long term effects and 24.4 million disability adjusted life years (DALYs) lost (see Endnote 3).



Preventing Health Effects and Related Economic Costs

The negative impacts on children’s developing brains resulting from exposure to lead has staggering economic costs that are borne by the affected children, their families and societies at large. These include health care costs, productivity losses and intellectual disability.

The largest economic burden of lead exposure is borne by low- and middle-income countries. Estimated annual costs (in international dollars) of lead exposure by global region, based on loss of IQ, include the following: Africa - \$134.7 billion; Latin America and the Caribbean - \$142.3 billion; and Asia - \$699.9 billion. For annual costs by country, visit the New York University map of Economic Costs of Lead Exposure (see Endnote 4).

The cost of removing existing decorative lead paint from surfaces in homes, schools and other buildings can be substantial. By contrast, the economic cost is low for eliminating the use of lead compounds in new decorative paints. In fact, many manufacturers have already successfully reformulated their paint products to avoid the intentional addition of lead. According to the paint industry, the reformulation of residential and decorative paints to eliminate lead additives is feasible, and the technical and cost impacts are manageable. Increasingly, paint producers are publicly stating that it is possible to eliminate lead additives in all types of paint.

Global Activity

Lead is a cumulative toxicant that poses serious risks to human health and development, with children being especially vulnerable. Lead-containing paint remains one of the major sources of lead exposure for children globally. The international community, governments, industry and non-governmental organizations are working together to promote the establishment of lead paint laws in all countries.

In 2009, the second International Conference on Chemicals Management under the SAICM policy framework endorsed a global partnership to promote the phasing out of lead paint and invited UN Environment and WHO to serve as the joint Secretariat for this partnership. Subsequently the Lead Paint Alliance was established with the goal of phasing out the manufacture, import and sale of paints containing lead and eventually to eliminate the risks from such paint. This timeline provides an overview of the Lead Paint Alliance's accomplishments, which have increased in recent years.

2011 – Lead Paint Alliance: UN Environment and WHO published the Lead Paint Alliance operational framework.

2012-2015 – SWITCH-Asia Lead Paint Elimination Project: The European Union (EU) funded work led by the International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN) in seven Asian countries to help phase out lead paint, five of which ended up passing lead paint laws.

2014-2017 – GEF UN Environment Lead Paint Elimination Project in Africa: IPEN worked directly with four countries and reached out to additional countries in Africa to promote lead paint phase out. Three countries ended up passing lead paint laws.

May 2017 - WHO Chemicals Management Roadmap: The Roadmap included an action item for WHO Member States to establish lead paint laws.

August 2017 - American Bar Association (ABA) Resolution: The ABA encouraged their members to support lead paint laws worldwide.

September 2017 - 2017 Update on the Global Status of Legal Limits on Lead in Paint: UN Environment provided lead paint background information and an update on progress toward establishing laws.

November 2017 - Model Law & Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint: UN Environment provided lead paint background information and a model template for a lead paint law.

December 2017 - UNEA 3 Resolution on Lead Paint: Member States passed a resolution calling for the global elimination of lead paint through the establishment of lead paint laws.

May 2019 - Two-Year Lead Paint Alliance Action Plan: The Two-Year Lead Paint Alliance Action Plan laid out concrete actions for partners to promote lead paint elimination.

2019 – 2021 - SAICM GEF Project: The project will assist governments to establish lead paint laws in at least 40 countries and provide guidance to industry to facilitate the shift to producing non-lead paints.

Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint

2011 - Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint formally launched



2012-2015 - SWITCH-Asia Lead Paint Elimination Project



2014-2017 - GEF Lead Paint Elimination Project in Africa



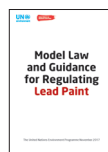
May 2017 - WHO Chemicals Management Roadmap



August 2017 - ABA Resolution on Lead Paint



September 2017 - 2017 Global Status Update



November 2017 - Model Law & Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint



December 2017 - UNEA 3 Resolution on Lead Paint



May 2019 - Two-Year Lead Paint Alliance Action Plan



2019-2021 - SAICM GEF Project

Global Status of Lead Paint Laws

The map below shows data on the status of countries' lead paint laws as provided by governments to UN Environment and WHO (see Endnote 2). As of 30 September, 2019, 73 countries had confirmed that they have legally binding controls on lead in paint, 85 stated that they do not, and information was unavailable for the remaining 35 countries.

Map 2: Countries with Lead Paint Laws, as of September 2019

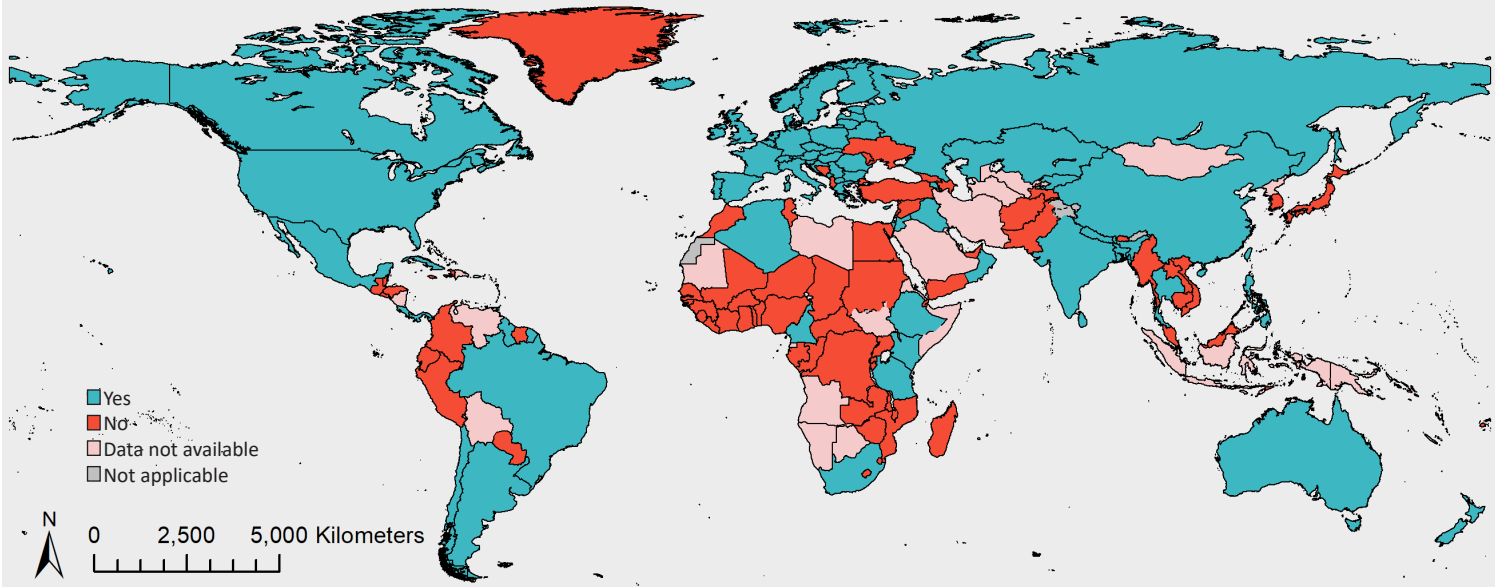
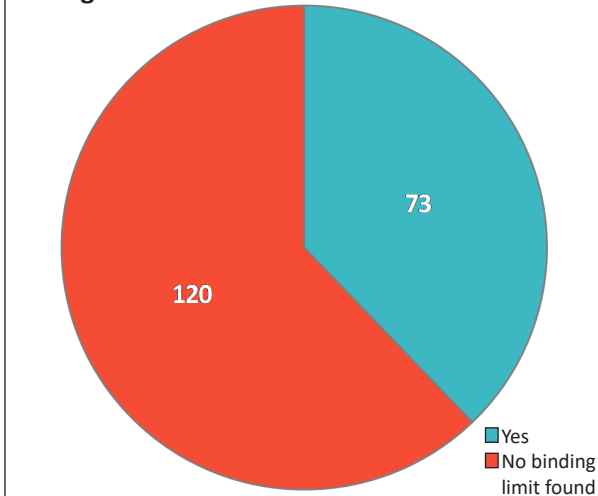


Figure 1: Countries with Lead Paint Laws



Currently **73** countries have lead paint laws and more countries are passing new laws every year.

Lead is Still Present in Paint in High Levels in Many Countries

Since 2009, more than 100 studies have shown that lead paints are still widely sold in low- and middle-income countries. Most of the paints tested for lead were found to exceed the 90 parts per million (ppm) or 600 ppm legal limit that has been set by many countries as an achievable limit. In addition, many of these paints contained very high levels of lead: above 10,000 ppm of the dry weight of the paint. To see paint testing results by country, go to the link for the IPEN map entitled “Lead Levels in Paint Around the World” (see Endnote 5). IPEN is a Lead Paint Alliance partner and is an international public interest, non-profit organization comprised of hundreds of participating environmental and public health organizations in over 100 countries, primarily in developing and transition countries.

The Importance of Lead Paint Laws

The elimination of lead exposure at its source is the single most effective action to protect people from the harmful effects of lead. Most industrialized countries adopted laws or regulations to control the lead content of residential and decorative paints in the 1970s and 1980s, based on clear findings that lead-containing household paint is a major source of lead exposure in children. However, the continued use of lead in paint in many parts of the world remains a significant environmental source of human exposure. To protect human health, laws, regulations or enforceable standards are needed in every country to stop the manufacture, sale and import of lead-containing paints.

Global Approaches to Lead Paint Laws

Countries that have enacted laws to limit the lead content in paint have generally used one of two approaches: (1) establish a single regulatory limit on the total concentration of lead in paint from all sources (currently used in 35 countries) or (2) establish a set of chemical-specific regulatory limits based on the management of risks of individual lead compounds that are used as additives in paint (currently used in the EU's Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemical (REACH) regulation). Both approaches have been effective in limiting the lead content in paint.

90 ppm total lead is the concentration limit recommended by the "Model Law and Guidance for Regulating Lead Paint". It is the lowest, most protective regulatory limit for lead paints that has been set in countries.

Legal Approach 1: Regulatory Limits on Total Lead Concentration

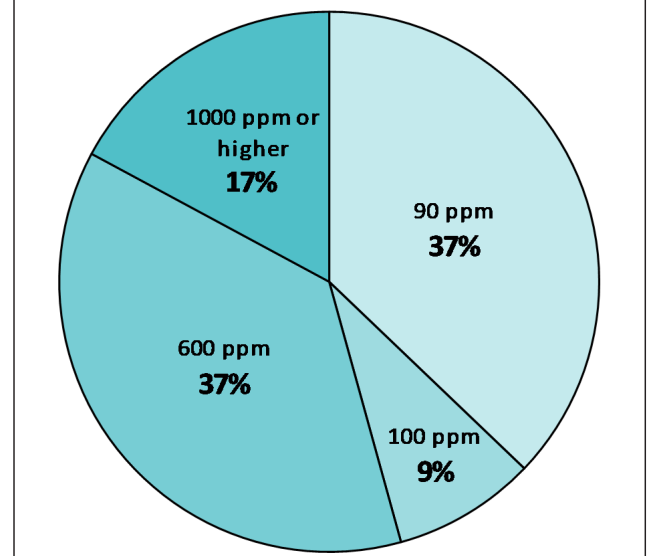
Of the 73 countries with lead paint laws, 35 countries have established a single regulatory limit on the total or soluble lead concentration in paint (in parts per million). These existing lead limits range from 90 ppm to 1,000 ppm or higher. Twenty-nine countries have a limit of 90, 100 or 600 ppm, which are all relatively low levels and indicate that lead compounds have probably not been added to the paint. Among countries with low limits, only one country uses a regulatory limit on soluble lead content, which is somewhat less protective than a limit on total lead content. There may be additional countries that also currently use a regulatory limit on soluble rather than total lead.

Table 2: Countries with Limits on Total Lead Concentration
(s) - limit applies to soluble lead content only

90 ppm	100 ppm	600 ppm	1000 ppm or higher
Bangladesh*	Switzerland	Argentina	Algeria
Canada	Thailand	Brazil	Armenia
Cameroon	United Republic of Tanzania	Chile	Australia
China (s)		Costa Rica	Belarus
Ethiopia		Dominica	Cuba
India		Guyana	New Zealand
Iraq		Mexico	
Israel*		Oman	
Jordan**		Panama	
Kenya		South Africa	
Nepal		Sri Lanka	
Philippines		Trinidad and Tobago	
United States of America		Uruguay	

*New since 1 October, 2018
**The law has been updated

Figure 2: Percentage of Countries by Lead Concentration Limit



Legal Approach 2: Chemical-Specific Regulatory Limits

Chemical-specific regulatory limits are used by 38 countries, of which 31 have adopted the EU REACH regulation on lead compounds in paints. EU REACH restricts the addition of certain specific lead compounds to paints intended for supply to the general public, based on risk management assessments. Some specific lead compounds for use in paints are subject to an authorization procedure for manufacturers and importers that requires analyses of health and environmental risks and the availability of non-lead alternatives.

Table 3: Countries with Chemical-Specific Regulatory Limits

Austria^	Czech Republic^	Germany^	Italy^	Lithuania^	Netherlands^	Portugal^	Slovenia^
Belgium^	Denmark^	Greece^	Kazakhstan	Luxembourg^	North Macedonia	Romania^	Spain^
Bulgaria^	Estonia^	Hungary^	Kyrgyzstan	Malta^	Russian Federation	Sweden^	
Croatia^	Finland^	Iceland^	Latvia^	Monaco	Norway^	Serbia	United Kingdom^
Cyprus^	France^	Ireland^	Liechtenstein^	Montenegro	Poland^	Slovakia^	

^Countries that have adopted the EU REACH regulation

UN Environment Regions

Table 4: Countries by UN Environment Region

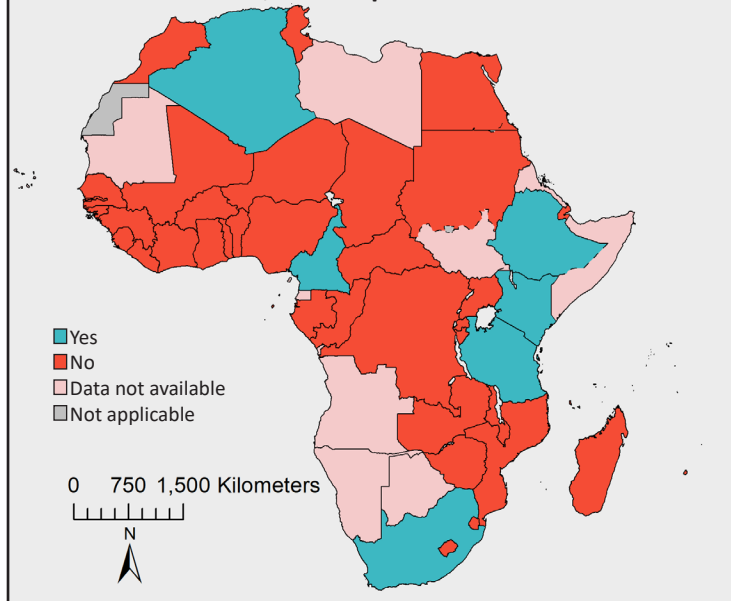
(For the purposes of this report, countries are grouped into the six UN Environment regions.)

Africa		Asia and the Pacific		West Asia	Europe		Latin America and the Caribbean	North America
Algeria	Mauritius	Afghanistan	Papua New Guinea	Bahrain	Albania	North Macedonia	Antigua and Barbuda	Canada
Angola	Morocco	Australia	Guinea	Iraq	Andorra		Barbuda	United States of America
Benin	Mozambique	Bangladesh	Philippines	Jordan	Armenia	Poland	Argentina	
Botswana	Namibia	Bhutan	Republic of	Kuwait	Austria	Portugal	Bahamas	
Burkina Faso	Niger	Brunei	Samoa	Lebanon	Azerbaijan	Romania	Barbados	
Burundi	Nigeria	Darussalam		Oman	Belarus	Russian Federation	Belize	
Cameroon	Rwanda	Cambodia	Singapore	Qatar	Belgium		Bolivia	
Cape Verde	Sao Tome & Principe	China	Solomon Islands	Saudi Arabia	Bosnia and Herzegovina	San Marino	Brazil	
Central African Republic	Senegal	Democratic Republic of	Sri Lanka	Syrian Arab Republic	Bulgaria	Serbia	Chile	
Chad	Seychelles	Republic of	Thailand	United Arab Emirates	Croatia	Slovakia	Colombia	
Comoros	Sierra Leone	Korea	Timor-Leste	Yemen	Cyprus	Slovenia	Costa Rica	
Congo	Somalia	Fiji	Tonga		Czech Republic	Spain	Cuba	
Côte d'Ivoire	Somalia	India	Tuvalu			Sweden	Dominica	
Democratic Republic of the Congo	South Africa	Indonesia	Tuvalu			Switzerland	Dominican Republic	
Djibouti	South Sudan	Iran	Vanuatu			Tajikistan	Ecuador	
Egypt	Sudan	Islamic Republic of	Vietnam			Turkey	El Salvador	
Equatorial Guinea	Togo	Iran				Turkmenistan	Grenada	
Eritrea	Tunisia	Japan				Ukraine	Guatemala	
Eswatini	Uganda	Kiribati				United Kingdom	Guyana	
Ethiopia	United Republic of Tanzania	Lao People's Democratic Republic				Uzbekistan	Haiti	
Gabon	Zambia	Malaysia					Honduras	
Gambia	Zimbabwe	Maldives					Jamaica	
Ghana		Marshall Islands					Mexico	
Guinea		Micronesia (Federated States of)					Nicaragua	
Guinea-Bissau		Mongolia					Panama	
Kenya		Myanmar					Paraguay	
Lesotho		Nauru					Peru	
Liberia		Nepal					Saint Kitts and Nevis	
Libya		New Zealand					Saint Lucia	
Madagascar		Pakistan					Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	
Malawi		Palau					Suriname	
Mali							Trinidad and Tobago	
Mauritania							Uruguay	
							Venezuela	

Source: UN Environment

Africa

Map 3: Countries in the Africa Region with Lead Paint Laws, as of September 2019



Current Status

Six countries (11%) in the Africa Region have lead paint laws. Rwanda is drafting a regulation to implement an East African Community (EAC) regional standard and Zambia is finalizing a voluntary standard limiting lead content to 90 ppm to be incorporated later into a lead paint law. South Africa is working on revising an existing law to reduce the lead limit to 90 ppm and Côte d'Ivoire is drafting a law to make their voluntary standard of 90 ppm lead mandatory. The EAC agreed on regional lead paint standards setting the limit of lead in paint at 90 ppm to be finalized later this year.

Paint testing has been conducted in 21 countries in the African Region. Depending on the country study and the target level, levels of lead exceeding target levels of 90 or 600 ppm ranged from 6% to 86% of samples (see Endnote 5). The annual economic cost of childhood lead exposure in the Africa region is estimated to be \$134.7 billion, or 4.03% of regional GDP (see Endnote 4).

Regional Activities

- September 2018: The seventh annual African Ministerial Conference on the Environment made a declaration on lead paint laws.
- November 2018: A side event on lead paint was held at the Third Inter-Ministerial Conference on Health and Environment in Africa highlighting the importance of enacting national legislation to ban lead in paint.
- January 2019: The EAC Technical Committee on Paints, Varnishes and Other Products amended EAC standards to establish a 90 ppm limit for lead in paints.
- May 2019: Twenty governments along with civil associations, industry representatives and project advisors attended the Africa Regional Workshop, at which participants agreed to work toward lead paint laws.
- June 2019: The importance of lead paint elimination was discussed at the East African Coatings show and industry indicated non-lead additive alternatives were available and cost-effective.
- 21 events were held in 14 countries in the region during the 2018 International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (ILPPW).

Figure 3: Number of Countries in the Africa Region with Lead Paint Laws

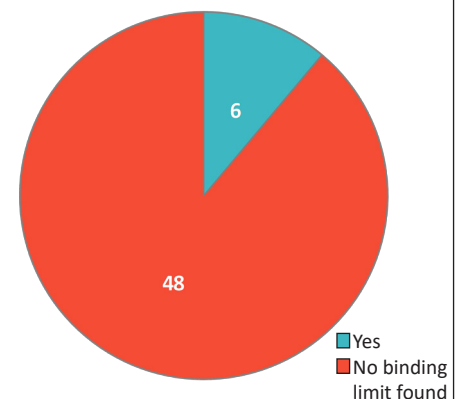


Table 5: 2019 Summary of Country-Specific Lead Paint laws in the Africa Region

Country	Lead Paint Laws
Algeria	5000 ppm lead limit for manufacture, import and sale of paint

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