

Global Report on the **Status of Legal Limits on Lead in Paint**



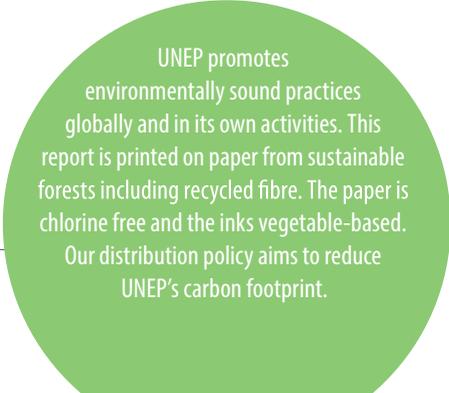
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FOREWORD



Exposure to lead paint poses significant harmful effects to human health, especially among children. The health effects, which are generally irreversible, can have a lifelong impact. Many countries have enacted controls to address these adverse impacts, but decorative paints containing lead are still widely sold and used in many developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

This report provides a global overview on the progress of countries in passing laws and regulations that limit the manufacture, import, export, sale and use of lead paints. It also illustrates a range of legal approaches that attempt to limit the use of lead-containing paint. In so doing, it becomes a valuable reference for countries seeking to establish their own laws and regulations on lead in paint.

A global target has been set for all countries to have lead paint controls by 2020. According to this report, only 36 per cent of countries have legally binding limits on lead paint. This suggests a significant gap still needs to be filled to achieve the target on time.

I hope this report becomes a central reference for anyone involved in enacting laws, regulations or mandatory standards that prohibit the manufacture, import, sale or use of lead paint in the crucial years ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Achim Steiner". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Achim Steiner
United Nations Under-Secretary General
and Executive Director, UNEP

I. INTRODUCTION

Lead is a cumulative toxicant that poses serious risks to the environment and human health. The World Health Organization lists lead exposure as one of the top ten environmental health threats globally.¹

No safe level of exposure to lead has been identified.² Children are especially vulnerable to negative health effects from lead, including decreased intelligence, and increased behavioral issues.³

Over the years, legal restrictions on lead in many countries have successfully decreased the use of lead in fuel, plumbing and other products and processes.⁴ These restrictions have effectively reduced the level of lead exposure in human populations. However paint for household and decorative use containing lead is still widely manufactured and purchased in many developing countries, and today is one of the major sources of lead exposure for children globally. While many highly industrialized countries have enacted laws, regulations or mandatory standards that prohibit the manufacture, import, sale or use of lead paint for interiors or exteriors of homes, schools and commercial buildings, decorative paints containing lead are still widely sold and used in many developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

Available data from paint testing studies in thirty-seven (37) developing and transition countries on 1,500 new enamel decorative paints, summarized in a United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) report, revealed that new paints with high lead

concentrations are widely available to consumers in many regions of the world.⁵ The data from these studies highlight that without appropriate national legislation and regulation, paints with lead will continue to be available in local markets.⁶ Deteriorating lead paint creates an ongoing pathway for contamination and exposure and the need for expensive lead paint removal and environmental contamination remediation. Eliminating lead paint significantly reduces the risk of lead exposure, and thus reduces risks to human health.

UNEP and the World Health Organization (WHO) convened the Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (The Lead Paint Alliance) in 2009 at the International Conference on Chemicals Management. The Alliance is a voluntary partnership established to prevent children's exposure to paints containing lead and to minimize occupational exposures to lead paint.⁷ The Alliance promotes the phase-out of the manufacture and sale of paints containing lead by 2020 and the reduction of the risks posed by lead-containing paints, especially to children.⁸ One of the Alliance's specific priorities is promoting the establishment of appropriate national legislative and regulatory frameworks to stop the manufacture, import, export, sale and use of lead paints

(see definitions in Table 1) and products coated with lead paints.⁹ The Alliance has established the following target: "by 2020, all countries will have adopted national legally binding laws, regulations, standards and/or procedures to control the production, import, sale and use of lead paints with special attention to the elimination of lead decorative paints and paints for other applications most likely to contribute to childhood lead exposure."¹⁰ In this report we will refer to these legally binding controls as "lead paint controls" (LPCs).

In October 2015 the International Conference on Chemicals Management Fourth session (ICCM4) passed a resolution recognizing progress in achieving this goal. The resolution also encouraged governments, civil society and the private sector to participate in the work of the Alliance to assist in achieving this goal and encouraged stakeholders "to promote and/or initiate national and/or regional discussions to address the possible establishment of effective measures, including regulation, to phase out the use of lead in paint."¹¹

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit on 25 September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change by 2030. The focus of the Lead Paint Alliance on preventing lead exposure among children from paint is particularly relevant to Goal 3 of the SDGs which seeks to "ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages." More specifically, SDG 3.9 states "by 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals..."¹²

Table 1 | Lead Paint Alliance: Definitions of Key Terms¹³

Definitions of Key Terms	
Lead paint	Paint to which one or more lead compounds have been added.
Lead compounds (typically added to paint)	“Lead compounds” include, but are not limited to: Lead monoxide, Lead octanoate, Lead chromate, Lead 2-ethylhexanoate, Lead sulfate, Lead oxide, Lead molybdate, Lead nitrate, Lead sulfo-chromate yellow, Lead naphthenate, Lead chromate molybdate sulfate red, Lead peroxide, Lead carbonate (white lead), Lead chromate oxide and Tri lead - bis (carbonate) - dihydroxide ¹ . (this list is non-exhaustive)
Paint	“Paint” includes varnishes, lacquers, stains, enamels, glazes, primers or coatings used for any purposes. Paint is typically a mixture of resins pigments, fillers, solvents, and other additives.

Based on legal best practices, the following overarching objectives of lead paint controls have been identified by UNEP¹⁴.

1. Prevent the manufacture, use, import, and export of lead paint.
2. Develop a system with effective means of enforcement and compliance and integrate the new lead paint laws and regulations into existing legal frameworks.
3. Establish institutional responsibilities and arrangements for the management and enforcement of legislation.

The objective of this report is twofold:

It is organized as follows:

- I. Introduction
- II. Methodology
- III. A Global Overview of Countries with Legally Binding Limits on Lead in Paint
- IV. Illustrative Examples of Regulatory Approaches
 - a. Restrictions on Content and Use of Lead Paint
 - b. Regulations on the Manufacture, Export, Import, and Sale of Lead Paint
 - c. Paint Testing and Labeling Requirements
 - d. Enforcement Provisions

a. SAICM Report on the Status of Phasing Out of Lead Paint by Countries, September 2015

In order to measure progress on the establishment of lead paint controls, UNEP and WHO requested information over the period 2014-2015 from government representatives from all 196 countries that are members of the United Nations, and summarized the findings in a report to a meeting of the Strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management (SAICM).¹⁵ The 2015 SAICM report assessed whether countries have adopted legally binding laws, regulations, standards and/or procedures to control the production, import, export, sale, and use of lead paints with special attention to the elimination of lead decorative paints and lead paints for other applications most likely to contribute to childhood lead exposure. The findings in the 2015 SAICM report were based on surveys conducted by contacting SAICM national focal points. The main findings of the 2015 SAICM report, as of August 31, 2015, were as follows:

- Information was lacking for 71 countries.
- Fifty-nine (59) countries verified that their national governments have, at a minimum, established legally binding

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