

# Lead Paint in Housing

Lead paint is the predominant source of childhood lead poisoning.<sup>1</sup> Although lead paint was banned for residential use in 1978, it remains present in millions of homes in California. In California, all homes built before 1978 are presumed to contain lead. (17 Cal. Code Regs., § 35043.)

The ten jurisdictions that held Sherwin-Williams, ConAgra Grocery Products, and NL Industries accountable in *People v. ConAgra Grocery Products Company* (2017) 17 Cal.App.5th 51 are estimated to have more than 4.6 million units of pre-1980 housing and more than 1.5 million units of pre-1950 housing.<sup>2</sup>

Jurisdiction	Housing Units Built Before 1950	Housing Units Built From 1950 To 1979	Total Housing Units Built Before 1980
<b>Alameda County</b> <sup>3</sup>	80,134	194,874	275,008
<b>Los Angeles County</b>	899,306	1,721,252	2,620,558
<b>Monterey County</b>	20,307	67,754	88,061
<b>Oakland</b>	82,227	55,651	137,878
<b>San Diego (city)</b>	59,365	247,321	306,686
<b>San Francisco</b>	224,738	93,797	318,535
<b>San Mateo County</b>	52,610	157,433	210,043
<b>Santa Clara County</b>	58,593	368,051	426,644
<b>Solano County</b>	16,746	58,818	75,564
<b>Ventura County</b>	17,770	151,948	169,718
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,511,796</b>	<b>3,116,899</b>	<b>4,628,695</b>

(Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Selected Housing Characteristics)

Lead paint, like all paint, inevitably deteriorates: it flakes, chips, and turns to dust and can contaminate the air, soil, floors and other surfaces in the home. This is particularly true of lead paint on windows, doors and other friction surfaces. However, testing for and abating lead paint is extremely costly for property owners, because the work must be performed by licensed individuals in accordance with strict regulations.

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention webpage, Prevention Tips [on Lead Exposure], available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/tips.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Homes built in the first half of the 20th century tend to have significantly higher levels of lead in paint than homes built later.

<sup>3</sup> Not including Oakland.