

This Old House



Lead encapsulants.

The bad news: Title X, a federal law that goes into effect this year, requires all home sellers to fess up if there's lead paint in the house. The good news: The law also lets homeowners use encapsulants, a new abatement method. Encapsulants are easily rolled, brushed or sprayed over lead paint. You are considered "lead safe" for the life of the encapsulant—20 years, in the case of the best ones.

Note that they can't be used in all situations (chipping and peeling paint, for instance). And most go on thick, so fine woodwork can't be covered without losing detail. But experts say encapsulants can save homeowners 50 to 80 percent of the cost of traditional techniques.

Since there's no national standard, look for encapsulants that meet Massachusetts lead-program standards (see Directory) and contain an anti-ingestant such as Bitrex, a foul-tasting additive to discourage kids from eating paint chips.

p. 23—Encapsulants: L-B-C Lead Barrier Compound, about \$39 per gal.; Fiberlock Technologies Inc., 630 Putnam Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139-0802; 800-342-3755. For more information, Massachusetts Department of Public Health Child Lead Poisoning Prevention Program; 617-753-8400. Lead-abatement videos free to in-state residents. Our thanks to Roy Petre, assistant program direc-

Project

US: Hammers, Nails, and Insulation, Scaffolding, Driveways, and More Wiring, and a Star Clapboard

Norm Abram installing soffit vents in Salem, Massachusetts