

LEAD POISONING IS COMPLETELY PREVENTABLE.

Lead poisoning in Syracuse has been a serious public health issue in the community for too many decades, with our city's families suffering enduring health and social consequences for generations.

What is the Syracuse Lead Law?

After years of advocating for the city of Syracuse to do more to address the high number of children with lead poisoning, in 2020, Syracuse passed a law to prevent lead exposure from paint. The law requires regular inspections of homes for lead paint hazards in order to obtain or renew a license to rent a property. It is meant to catch and fix lead paint hazards before kids get lead poisoning.

Before this law, landlords only had to fix lead paint hazards if tenants called the city to complain and city inspectors issued a violation, or after a doctor reported harmful levels of lead in a child.

What Are the Gaps in Enforcing the Syracuse Lead Law?

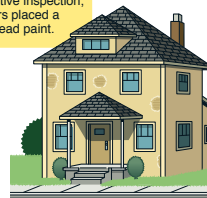
Syracuse's lead prevention law has now been in effect for five years and enforced for four. Early data show the city has issued more violations for lead paint hazards since then, particularly in the most at-risk areas of the city. But the data also show that children in Syracuse continue to suffer at high rates from lead paint exposure and elevated blood lead levels.

- Many landlords are not following the required steps to obtain a rental registry certificate or a certificate of compliance. Only properties that apply for and renew certificates will be inspected under the new lead law, but the majority of rental properties in Syracuse are not even registering.
- Many properties in Syracuse are receiving multiple and repeated violations over a short period of time. This shows that landlords are likely using temporary measures to fix lead hazards but not maintaining them. Landlords need to fix lead paint hazards properly, and city and county inspectors need to make sure they do it right.

Syracuse and the Onondaga County Department of Health can and must do more to reduce childhood lead poisoning. For the lead law to have any chance of being effective, the city must make sure that all landlords register their properties with the city so that inspections can happen before a child is exposed to lead poisoning.

How Syracuse's Lead Law Should Work

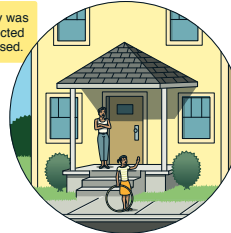
After a proactive inspection, city inspectors placed a violation for lead paint.



The property owner took action to remediate the violation.



Property was re-inspected and passed.



What Often Happens Instead

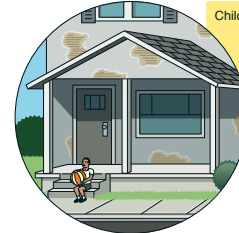
The city never inspected the property because the owner didn't apply for the rental registry.



The owner has taken no action and the deteriorating lead paint gets worse.



Children continue to be exposed to lead from the deteriorating lead paint.



Ways Lack of Enforcement Is Failing Tenants



What Should the City Do?

- Ensure all landlords apply for rental registry certificates so they get regular inspections.
- Work with the Onondaga Department of Health to identify and follow up with repeat offenders.
- Enforce more serious penalties against landlords who don't act to fix lead paint hazards, fail to register their properties, or are repeat offenders.
- Do full interior and exterior inspections for rental registry certificates and renewals as required by the lead law before kids are harmed. If access to the property is blocked, the city must continue to seek administrative warrants to access the property for inspections.
- Pay close attention to vacant properties.
- Regularly review the data to identify what is and isn't working under the 2020 lead law.
- Better inform the public of their rights as tenants and stop reporting parents to Child Protective Services for their landlord's responsibilities.
- The Department of Health should test for lead in water as well as paint, and the City should prioritize inspecting properties with confirmed lead service water lines.