

# Partnership for Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes



DISTRICT  
DEPARTMENT  
OF THE  
ENVIRONMENT



*green forward*



*The number one place a child is likely to be harmed by an environmental health hazard is in his or her own home.*

## The Need for Healthy Housing

Every year in the District of Columbia, thousands of children and adults suffer from serious health problems caused or worsened by environmental health hazards. But what many parents do not know is that the number one place a child is likely to be harmed by an environmental health hazard is in his or her own home. Asthma, lead poisoning, unintentional injuries and other harmful health effects can all be linked to problems within the home. The most common culprits include peeling and/or deteriorating paint, mold, insect and rodent infestation, overuse of pesticides and other chemicals, poor ventilation, water leaks, trip and fall hazards, and malfunctioning cooling and heating systems.

In response to this threat, the District Department of Environment (DDOE) has launched the DC Partnership for Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes, an award-winning project aimed at identifying and ending environmental health and safety threats in the homes of families throughout the District.

## How It Works >>

The Partnership, spearheaded by DDOE's Lead and Healthy Housing Division, consists of a broad coalition of District agencies and some of the District's most prominent medical providers, non-profits and environmental health professionals. Participating health providers and social service agencies serve as front-line responders, identifying children in distress due to severe and uncontrolled asthma, lead poisoning and/or situations in which a pregnant woman is living in a hazardous home.

The first-line responders refer these families to DDOE's Lead and Healthy Housing Division for intake, a comprehensive home environmental assessment, family education and case management coordination. Once the hazards have been identified, DDOE creates a Technical Assistance Report that serves as a roadmap for the correction of identified hazards and details the health issues related to those hazards.



## Seven Healthy Homes Principles >>>

1. Keep it Clean
2. Keep it Pest - Free
3. Keep it Dry
4. Keep it Well Ventilated
5. Keep it Safe
6. Keep it Contaminant-Free
7. Keep it Maintained



*Water damage and leaks are common in bathrooms and can lead to problems with mold and mildew.*

*Peeling paint around doors, window sills and on walls become environmental hazards, which should only be remedied using lead - safe work practices.*

## Eliminating Hazards >>>

Case workers at DDOE, several of whom are Registered Nurses with expertise in Healthy Homes interventions, pursue a holistic strategy towards eliminating hazards. DDOE case workers customize solutions to address the challenges presented by each specific case, taking into account the ownership status of the client's home.

For families who own their own home, case managers provide free consultation on how to pursue safe hazard remediation privately, and work with partners at the DC Department of Housing and Community Development and National Nursing Centers Consortium to secure grant funds for repair work. For families in public or subsidized housing, DDOE works with the DC Housing Authority, the city's public housing agency, and the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), the city's housing code enforcement agency, to either make repairs or pursue regulatory action to bring landlords into compliance.

DDOE works with landlords and property managers to conduct prescribed remediation efforts voluntarily and refers cases to DCRA for appropriate follow up when landlords fail to make the corrected changes. This innovative approach gives landlords and rental property owners the chance to address hazards before fines and penalties are assessed, creating a climate of partnership and cooperation.

## Who Are the Participants >>

√ Children with severe and uncontrolled asthma.

√ District Residents with a child less than 6 yrs.

Typically these families live in homes where maintenance has been deferred and that may contain:

- Chipping and/or Peeling Paint
- Mold / Water Damage or Leaks
- Pests (Insects and/or Rodents)
- Excessive Household Clutter
- Recent Renovations
- Structural Concerns
- Cigarette Use / Environmental Tobacco Smoke
- Indoor Climate Control / Ventilation Issues

## Participants Receive >>

- A home environmental assessment
- Environmental health education
- Trainings and/or tools for reducing threats
- Assistance in coordinating resources
- Follow up support from staff



## Sharing Information & Tracking Outcomes >>

To further support its Healthy Homes Program, DDOE created an interactive webpage on home hazards, allowing District residents to obtain information about a variety of health risks that can exist within homes, accessible on the web at: [dchealthyhomes.com](http://dchealthyhomes.com).

The Program and Partnership serve not only those District residents whose homes contain hazards, but also help educate the referring agencies about the hazards found, thus resulting in a broader, District-wide understanding of the environmental health threats found in the nation's capital, how best to eliminate them, and how to better communicate about health risks with District residents. Utilizing a powerful database, DDOE uses data to analyze and report on health hazards currently prevalent in the District's housing, identifying geographic correlations and other trends related to the city's home.

## Contact Us >>

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