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From the May 10, 2010 edition

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RHODE ISLAND & MASSACHUSETTS NEWS BRIEFS

R.I. adopts new EPA lead-paint safety program

PROVIDENCE – Rhode Island is the first state in New England authorized by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for a new lead-paint safety program.

The R.I. Department of Health announced last week that it has been authorized by EPA to manage the state's Lead-Safe Remodeler/Renovator Program.

The program requires that any renovation or remodeling done to homes built before 1978 is done by a licensed lead-hazard-control firm. That includes contractors, painters, electricians and other workers who may disturb 6 square feet or more of paint inside a home or 20 square feet or more of paint on the outside of a home.

"Rhode Island has had lead-safe regulations in place since 2001," said DOH Director David R. Gifford. "We now have the ability to ensure that only licensed lead-hazard-control firms are doing work on homes built before 1978. Rates of childhood lead poisoning in Rhode Island have declined dramatically in the past 10 years; however, we need to continue to prevent this health hazard."

According to DOH, the recent changes to Rhode Island regulations are the result of a new EPA law that requires all states to adopt and enforce minimum national standards for renovating and remodeling pre-1978 homes or to permit the EPA to conduct enforcement. •