



ASCIP *RISK ALERT!*

Date: October 1, 2007

Attention: ASCIP Members

Subject: Lead Hazards in Toys and Lunchboxes

In view of the recent media attention given to the incidents of Lead contamination being found in some toys and lunchboxes at several locations within the United States, government officials, manufacturers, and safety groups are recalling some items contaminated with Lead.

Lead is a toxic substance that, if ingested or inhaled, may result in a wide range of adverse health effects. Both children and adults can suffer health effects from Lead exposure. The most common of these health effects in small children are learning difficulties, behavioral problems and hearing difficulties.

The most common Lead exposures involving young children are those of peeling or chipping paint. These paint chips are easily broken down into small particles (sometimes dust) and then ingested by the child during play, exploration, and other activities. While many new toys and lunchboxes may not contain Lead at all, others which have chipping, peeling, or dust coatings may expose children to Lead if they chew, lick or otherwise place such items in their mouths. In the case of soft fabric or plastic lunch boxes, unwrapped food rubbing against a surface impregnated with colorant or materials containing Lead may transfer Lead residue to the food and then to the consumer.

According to the California Health & Safety Code, “no person shall manufacture or sell to any retailer any toy that may be contaminated with paints or lacquers that contain Lead in excess of Federal regulations.”. While this regulation may help prohibit the sale of Lead contaminated toys and products in California, the regulation is unlikely to prevent all such toys from being sold in California.

Since not all toys and other products with excessive Lead content may be detected prior to sale, it is important to be diligent in the review of recall notices posted by various safety organizations and the manufacturers themselves. ASCIP recommends that each educational agency review these concerns within its own organization to ensure that toys and other products purchased or acquired for institutional use, such as in child care, parenting, and other areas where children may be at risk are Lead-free or, if containing Lead, are within the recommended Federal and State guidelines.

Schools may elect to ensure that parents are aware of the concerns related to childhood Lead exposure and, where suspect products are observed in the hands of students, develop a mechanism by which those parents might be alerted to check the safety of such items.

ASCIP staff is available to assist in addressing potential Lead exposure concerns as they may arise.

Related Risk Alerts:

[Lead Hazards in Drinking Water](#)
[Potential Lead Hazards in Synthetic Turf](#)
[Lead Hazards in Children's Books](#)