



EPA Now Requires Certifications in Lead-Based Paint

The Environmental Protection Agency requires contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that disturb paint in housing built before 1978 to be certified and follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination.

Landlords who use their own crews to work on investment properties must also follow the new rule. To sign up for training at a discounted price see below.

2012 Safe Work Practices Training –

If your unit was built prior to 1978, it may contain lead-based paint. Lead from paint, paint chips, and dust can pose health hazards if not managed properly.

Safe Work Practices Training is provided by a certified trainer through the Metro HRA and other local housing authorities, to train and certify property owners and their agents on the safe stabilization of lead based paint hazards. Training is required in order for you to perform the work. **Proof of certification is required before a unit will pass a Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection or before a housing assistance payment will be made.**

2012 SAFE WORK PRACTICES TRAINING DATES:

**Saturdays 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.
May 12th, July 14th, September 15th and November 17th, 2012**

To register, contact Kimberly Henry at Kimberly.Henry@stpha.org, or 651-298-5081.

There will be a \$50 charge per person to offset the cost of this training, due at the time of registration.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can access a copy of the Metro HRA Owner's Handbook at www.metrocouncil.org. Go to Housing, Metro HRA, Landlords, Owner Handbook. It's packed with useful information.

Direct Deposit

Direct Deposit/US Bank Card
Metro HRA provides all landlords the opportunity to enroll in the direct deposit system as a convenient payment option for receipt of your Housing Assistance Payment (HAP). By offering direct deposit, Metro HRA provides you the option to have your monthly HAP directly deposited into your checking, savings or now Metro HRA provides a third option of depositing the HAP directly onto a US Bank Card.

Direct Deposit is a convenient way to receive your payments and eliminate the delays of mailing and the possibility of lost checks. This system will be mandatory by 12/31/2012 so sign up now.

To request an enrollment form for direct deposit, or to make a change if you already have direct deposit, please contact your tenant's coordinator.

Are You Interested in Lowering Your Costs and Raising Your Profits?

In today's economy, lowering costs is no longer a luxury—it is a necessity. For rental property owners, this has long been a priority. Here are a few tips to cool off maintenance costs and heat up rental profits.

- ✓ **Practice Preventive maintenance.**
Heading off potential problems, and fixing small ones before they become big and expensive, is like money in the bank. Cleaning gutters, inspecting plumbing for leaks, trimming trees near the house or building, and replacing missing shingles all are simple steps you can take on the road to bigger savings.
- ✓ **Carefully screen tenants.**
Knowing as much as you can about potential renters, especially their rental history and housekeeping habits can help you avoid future problems, some of which could be costly.
- ✓ **Buy quality materials.**
Spending a few extra dollars now might save you hundreds later by buying things that last longer and require less maintenance.
- ✓ **Be diligent about monthly inspections.**
Do not wait for a tenant to report a problem. Take a look and see what needs to be done, take care of it sooner rather than later.

Owner Briefings!

Would you like to know more about the Section 8 rent assistance program but don't know who to ask? Metro HRA can help. We are offering ongoing briefings to provide Landlords/ Property Managers with valuable information about the Section 8 program. These briefings offer owners/managers an opportunity to see what is new, ask questions, and network with other property owners. The briefings last approximately one hour and are offered on the 2nd Tuesday (except for May, it is the 3rd Tuesday) of every third month at Metro HRA, 390 North Robert St., St. Paul. Upcoming briefings are as follows:

- **May 15, 2012, 2:00 p.m.**
- **August 14, 2012, 10:00 a.m.**
- **November 13, 2012. 2:00 p.m.**

For more information or to register contact Mary Doohar at mary.dooher@metc.state.mn.us or 651-602-1445.

Inspections

When an inspection fails we are not putting blame on the owner or tenant. We are citing an item or items that need to be repaired before the unit can pass. The owner and tenant need to share the responsibility of keeping a unit in good repair.

Prepare for the HQS inspection as soon as you receive notice of your inspection date. Checking for potential fail items and making repairs ahead of time greatly increases the possibility of a passed inspection on the first visit. Some common items that you should check prior to the inspection:

- There must be a smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector [MN Statute 299F.51] installed within 10 feet of every sleeping area, and replaced at least every 10 years.
- Dryer ducts must be metal material. The transition piece must be UL2158A metalized and not more than 8 feet. The exhaust piece must be smooth metal, connected without any screws
- Our motto is "If it's there, it must work as designed", some examples, dishwashers, garage door openers
- Repair or replace deteriorated refrigerator or freezer door gaskets.
- Insure that all locks on doors and windows work properly.

A large number of re-inspections fail. We think this is happening because owners call before the repairs are completed, anticipating it will take more time for the inspector to get back into the unit. This ends up being a poor use of your time and the inspector's time. Please be sure the repairs are completed **BEFORE** you call. **Thank you for being proactive.**

A Word About Weather Deferrals...

This past winter has been milder than we have seen in years and it shows in the reduction in the number of weather deferrals that were issued for outside work.

Remember if you were issued a weather deferral this year for work on your property, the work **MUST** be completed and reinspected by May 15, 2012 to avoid a possible interruption in payments. If the work is completed by May 31, 2012 you will still get paid for June and ongoing but your payment may be interrupted while we verify those repairs. Please call our reinspection line, 651-602-1626, as soon as the repairs are completed. If we do not receive a call we will be stopping June payments until the unit passes.

IS THERE SOMETHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO KNOW?

If there are topics you would like to see addressed in upcoming issues of the newsletter, please e-mail them to Mary Dooher at mary.dooher@metc.state.mn.us

VAWA

Are you familiar with the 'Right of Victims of Domestic Abuse to Terminate the Lease'? Minnesota State Statute 504B.206 is available on line and can explain your rights and the tenant's rights under this Statute. Google the state Statute to learn more.

ENERGY STAR

Consider buying ENERGY STAR products next time you replace an appliance. It's good for you and good for the environment. Go to www.energystar.gov for more information.

GO GREEN

Would you like to receive the Metro HRA Newsletter and other important information electronically? Please send your name/property name, phone number and e-mail address to mary.dooher@metc.state.mn.us.

METRO HRA

390 North Robert Street
St. Paul, MN 55101-1805

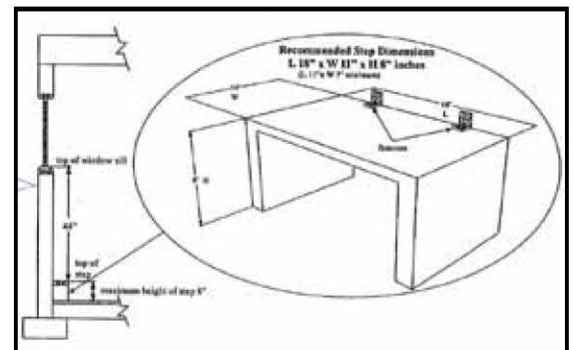
FREE ADVERTISING OPPORTUNITY

Do you have a vacancy to rent? HousingLink is the primary distributor of affordable housing information in the Twin Cities. The HousingLink online listing service is easy to use and it is FREE. The website is viewed by almost 35,000 people each month and used to list vacancies by over 6,000 landlords. Get the word out through Housing Link! Visit www.housinglink.org, Click on the landlord link and advertise your affordable housing vacancies today.

This website also provides current Payment Standard and Utility Allowance information for the Twin Cities area Housing Authorities.

Egress Windows Vital to Safety!

Egress is literally defined as “a path out” or “to emerge”, and these items directly apply to the design principles behind egress windows. As a result, egress windows are essential to safety in homes with basements, particularly those with basement bedrooms. Every bedroom needs at least one egress window. If a bed is found in an area without an egress window, it would be considered a violation of housing quality standards.



According to state code covering windows and window wells, “all emergency escape and rescue opening shall have a minimum net clear opening of 5.7 square feet.”

Metro HRA inspectors look for the following:

- The bottom of an egress window cannot be more than 44 inches off the floor.
- If an egress window is higher than 44 inches, a step or ladder must be added to assist the tenant in escaping from the unit in case of fire.
- Any step added to an egress window must be securely attached to the wall.
- Windows must have a minimum of 24 inches of net clear opening height and a minimum of 20 inches width.