

Abstract for the Lead-Free Military Surfaces Act

Title: The Lead-Free Military Surfaces Act

Purpose: The Lead-Free Military Surfaces Act aims to eliminate the use of lead-based paints, including Chemical Agent Resistant Coating (CARC) paint, on all exterior surfaces within the United States military and to ensure the safe and effective removal and replacement of existing lead-based paint. This initiative seeks to protect the health of military personnel, reduce environmental hazards, and enhance the operational readiness of the Armed Forces.

Background: Lead-based paints have been extensively used in military installations, vehicles, and equipment due to their durability and resistance properties. However, lead exposure is a significant health risk, causing neurological damage, kidney damage, reproductive problems, and other serious health issues. The continued presence of lead-based paints in military environments poses a danger to both military personnel and civilians.

Key Statistics and Findings:

1. **Health Risks:** Lead exposure can cause severe health issues, including impaired concentration, anger, anxiety, depression, memory loss, fatigue, irritability, tremors, weakness, high blood pressure, and severe damage to the brain and kidneys. Chronic lead poisoning can also mimic symptoms of traumatic brain injury or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
2. **Military Housing:** A significant number of military family homes contain lead-based paint. For example, at Fort Benning, approximately 2,274 out of 4,001 family homes were found to have lead-based paint. The presence of deteriorating lead paint in these homes poses an immediate hazard to the health of the families living there.
3. **Children at Risk:** There are an estimated 100,000 children ages 0 through 5 living on military bases across the United States. Young children are particularly vulnerable to lead poisoning, which can cause developmental issues and long-term health problems.
4. **Lead Exposure Monitoring:** Despite existing regulations, lead exposure remains a concern in military environments, particularly on firing ranges. A 2012 report indicated that 40 service members had been tested for chronic lead poisoning, with several showing dangerously high levels of lead in their blood.
5. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) both agree that there is no known safe level of lead.
6. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the National Toxicology Program (NTP) have also concluded that there is evidence of adverse health effects in children and adults at blood lead levels below 5 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g/dL}$).

Key Provisions:

1. **Prohibition of Lead-Based Paint:** The use of lead-based paint, including CARC paint, on any exterior surface within the United States military or by any military contractor is strictly prohibited.

2. **Removal and Replacement Program:** The Secretary of Defense shall establish a comprehensive program to identify, remove, and replace all existing lead-based paint on exterior surfaces within the United States military and by military contractors.
3. **Compliance and Safety:** The removal and replacement process will adhere to all relevant safety and environmental standards to ensure minimal risk to personnel and the environment.
4. **Reporting and Accountability:** The Secretary of Defense will submit annual reports to Congress detailing the progress of the removal and replacement program. Military contractors found in violation will face penalties, including contract termination and debarment.
5. **Public Awareness and Education:** The Department of Defense will conduct a public awareness campaign to inform military personnel, their families, and contractors about the dangers of lead exposure and the measures being taken to remove lead-based paints.

Justification:

The removal of lead-based paints from military environments is crucial for safeguarding the health of our service members and civilians. By eliminating these hazardous materials, we can prevent lead poisoning and other health issues, thereby ensuring a safer and more effective military force. Additionally, compliance with safety and environmental standards will demonstrate the military's commitment to responsible stewardship of resources and the well-being of its personnel.

Conclusion:

The Lead-Free Military Surfaces Act represents a necessary step toward improving the health and safety of military personnel and reducing environmental hazards. Your support in introducing and advancing this bill is vital to achieving these goals and enhancing the overall readiness and resilience of the United States Armed Forces.