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O.C. WATCHDOG

EPA lead rules could be costly

Agency says guidelines will make work more expensive, but an O.C. man says the cost is astronomical.

Renovating older homes is going to cost more due to new rules from the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

How much more? And will the gains in safety outweigh the cost? That's open to a bit of debate.

"Common renovation activities like sanding, cutting, and demolition can create hazardous lead dust



TERI SFORZA
REGISTER COLUMNIST

and chips by disturbing lead-based paint, which can be harmful to adults and

children," the EPA says. "To protect against this risk ... EPA issued a rule requiring the use of lead-safe practices and other actions aimed at preventing lead poisoning."

Under this rule, which was adopted in 2008 and took full-force effect this summer, "contractors performing renovation, repair and painting projects that

disturb lead-based paint in homes, child care facilities, and schools built before 1978 must be certified and must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination."

Firms doing this sort of work must become "EPA-certified renovators" by taking an eight-hour training course from an EPA-approved training provider. (See our website for information on how to do this.) Initial training costs top out at \$560, with refresher

courses required every four years or so topping out at \$340.

"Contractors must use lead-safe work practices," the EPA says, "and follow these three simple procedures: Contain the work area. Minimize dust. Clean up thoroughly."

The EPA estimates that the new rule will cost small businesses about \$2,111 more per year, or about 1 percent of revenues.

But "Termite" Terry Singleton, president of an

Orange County pesticide firm, says the costs to consumers will be far higher—some 400 percent higher, as he wrote to local lawmakers this summer. That would boost the cost of a common job from \$490 to \$2,328, according to his calculations.

"I have done my homework and would now like to provide you with some SHOCKING numbers," Singleton wrote. "Here is an example of a very com-

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O.C. CRIME

Police say work tamped