



Finally, certified lead-safe paints!

CONSUMERLINE By Ching M. Alano (The Philippine Star) | Updated July 12, 2016

<http://www.philstar.com/health-and-family/2016/07/12/1601791/finally-certified-lead-safe-paints>



Leading the way: Children hold a mock globe with the message “Lead Safe Paints For Our Children’s Health.”

Parents naturally want to protect their children from every possible harm. But what if the danger lurks in every nook and cranny of your own home? What if the culprit is no stranger to the family?

FYI, lead from paint and dust is a major source of childhood lead exposure. The UN-backed Global Alliance to Eliminate Lead Paint (GAELP) warns: “Paint that contains lead additives poses a risk of lead poisoning, especially for young children (babies being the most vulnerable). As lead paint deteriorates (cracks or peels) over time, children may inhale or ingest lead through household dust, paint chips or contaminated soil. There is no known level of lead exposure that is considered to be safe.”

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), childhood lead exposure can cause damage to the central nervous system and is linked to decreased intelligence as measured by IQ tests, reduced school performance, and behavioral problems, including aggression and violence.

WHO reports that “childhood lead exposure is estimated to contribute to about 600,000 new cases of children developing intellectual disabilities every year.”

But fret not, parents! Two of the country’s top paint makers and exporters — Boysen and Davies Paints — have just completed a Lead Safe Paint certification program with flying colors.

Pacific Paint (Boysen) Philippines, Inc. acquired Lead Safe Paint certificates for its Boysen, Nation, Titan, and Virtuoso brands (a total of 430 paint products), while Davies Paints Philippines, Inc. obtained certification for its Davies brand (a total of 379 paint products). Boysen and Davies are the first two companies in the world to secure the privilege to display the Lead Safe Paint mark on the cans of their certified paint brands.

“It’s certainly an honor to be one of the first companies in the world to earn a Lead Safe Paint certification. Boysen voluntarily removed lead-containing raw materials from its paint products over a decade ago, even when there were no regulations that required us to do so; so we’re certainly pleased that our efforts to promote lead-safe paints have been recognized by a global program,” said Johnson Ongking, vice president of Pacific Paint (Boysen) Philippines, Inc.

“Davies Paints has always been committed to manufacture high-quality paint products to meet global standards with the goal of making a positive impact on the industry, on people’s health and safety, and on environmental protection. As a member of both the US and the Philippine Green Building Council, our efforts are directed towards providing green decorative and industrial coatings to our customers. This distinction, as one of the world’s first certified Lead Safe Paints, is a testament to the Davies’ mission,” said Johnlee Garcia, president, Davies Paints Philippines, Inc.

SCS Global Services, based in California, USA, conducted the third-party assessment confirming that Boysen and Davies paint products comply with the Lead Safe Paint certification standard, which makes them compliant as well with the lead limit of 90 parts per million (ppm) under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Administrative Order 2013-24 (also known as the Chemical Control Order for Lead and Lead Compounds).

Perry Gottesfeld, president of Occupational Knowledge International, who advised IPEN and the EcoWaste Coalition on this trailblazing initiative, said: “Given that there are thousands of paints on the market, only products with the Lead Safe Paint certification label can provide the assurance that consumers need to know that the paint they purchase contains no added lead.”

Under this independent certification program, the Philippine Institute of Pure and Applied Chemistry, based at Ateneo de Manila University, assisted in preparing the Boysen and Davies product samples that were sent to EMSL Analytical, Inc., an accredited US Environmental Protection Agency National Lead Laboratory, for total lead content analysis. The laboratory then submitted the results to the SCS so the certification assessment can be completed.

“The Lead Safe Paint mark can help customers to identify paints on the store shelves that do not contain toxic lead. Consumers will have peace of mind when they buy paints carrying such a distinct mark as these paints pose no lead exposure hazard to children, pregnant women, workers, and others, which can cause lifelong health problems,” stated Noli Abinales, president, EcoWaste Coalition.

“This certification program complements the DENR A.O. 2013-24 by providing a guarantee that certified paint products are independently tested and compliant with the regulation,” Abinales explained.

He urged, “We hope that more paint companies will join the program in the period leading to the phase-out deadline for lead-containing decorative paints by January 1, 2017. It will not only improve the company image but also bring about customer satisfaction and augment sales while protecting public health and the environment.”

We can only paint the picture of this unprecedented partnership between the paint industry and civil society in hopeful, colorful hues. Playing lead roles are The EcoWaste Coalition, a public interest environmental network of over 100 groups, and the Philippine Association of Paint Manufacturers (PAPM), an industry association that brings together over 70 paint companies and suppliers.

Following the promulgation in 2013 of the government's policy to control and eliminate the use of lead in paint, both the PAPM and the Ecowaste Coalition agreed to jointly promote the development of a voluntary certification program, which is simple, low-cost, and accessible to all interested paint manufacturers.

In three successive meetings in 2014, the EcoWaste Coalition and the PAPM (with support from IPEN and the Occupational Knowledge International) co-organized a multi-stakeholder process that eventually led to the adoption of the Lead Safe Paint certification standard, the corresponding logo, and the applicant company pledge not to add lead or lead compounds to paint formulations.

The ensuing Lead Safe Paint is intended to be easily recognizable to drive consumer demand and thus create an incentive for paint makers to obtain certification for their paint products.

Big paint purchasers, particularly national and local government agencies, real estate developers, shopping malls, schools, parks and playgrounds, and others, should now adopt a Lead Safe Paint procurement policy to ensure that only certified paints would be procured and applied for the exteriors and interiors of their facilities and amenities to protect children's and workers' health and promote a lead-safe environment for all.

With Boysen and Davies taking the lead, we can certainly paint a bright, healthy future for our children.

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More information about this monumental certification program is available at www.lead safepaint.org.