

BUSINESS

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ON THE MOVE

Home buyer worries over lead paint

By Leslie Mann

Hopkinton@wickedlocal.com

PUZZLED



Write to our real estate blogger.



Ann in Holden writes: Dear Leslie, My boyfriend and I are thinking about making an offer on a home. We're

starting to think about having a family so I want to be careful about any hazards. The listing for the home says the owners don't know if there's any lead paint. My boyfriend says if there's lead paint it's probably all been painted over and we don't need to worry about it. What do you think?

Dear Ann, You're right to be cautious when you're buying a home. Lead paint is certainly a concern in our area where there are many older homes. This is no small issue. According to the Centers for Disease Control, lead poisoning can cause brain damage, nerve damage, and

other serious problems, particularly in young children as well as adults with high blood pressure.

Although lead paint was banned in 1978, it does still exist in many homes. Painting over lead paint does not eradicate the problem, since the paint can loosen from the surface below and create lead dust. This is a particular worry with older windows. As the windows are opened and closed, paint can chip off and release lead dust.

If you decide to buy the home, your buyer's agent should include an inspection contingency as well as a lead paint contingency in your offer to purchase. This way, you have the right to test the home for lead paint to decide whether to go forward with the purchase. Many home inspectors will also conduct lead tests to determine where lead paint is present in the home.

If they discover there is lead paint, they can give you a written report so you can find out the cost to remediate. The costs will vary quite a bit depending on the extent

of the work that needs to be done. In some cases you can receive training to remediate the lead yourself, but if there's considerable lead paint in the home you're likely to need a licensed contractor. You can receive a free "All About Deleading" Guide from the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at 800-532-9571.

In some cases you may qualify for a Lead Paint Removal Credit of up to \$1,500. You can contact the Department of Revenue at 800-392-6089 to find out if you qualify.

Best of luck!

Do you have a puzzling real estate question? Write to our real estate blogger (Leslie Mann, c/o Hopkinton Crier, 33 New York Ave, Framingham, MA 01701 or realestatequeries@yahoo.com) and she'd be glad to answer your confidential questions here. Follow her at <http://blogs.wickedlocal.com/onthemove>.

About the author: Real estate blogger Leslie Mann is a real estate agent with Hallmark Sotheby's International Realty in Hopkinton.