

ABSTRACT**LEAD IN PAINTS IN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO**

Carol Homer

This study was proposed to determine levels of lead in locally manufactured paints in collaboration with local paint manufacturers. Samples of imported paints were also analyzed for comparison with local paints. The major sources of lead in local paints were traced through analysis of their corresponding raw materials supplied by local manufacturers. Four of 5 major local paint companies participated in the study, on condition of confidentiality of results. Lead concentrations of selected local paints were monitored over a seven-year period. During this period our findings were discussed with the paint manufacturers, in an effort to encourage them to eliminate and/or reduce lead levels in their paints.

Levels of lead well in excess of the proposed permissible limit of 0.06% dry weight were detected in many local oil-based decorative, industrial, marine and automobile paints, in hues of red, orange, yellow and brown, while water-based paints contained $<3.65 \mu\text{g/g}$ Pb dry weight.

Lead-based pigments and driers were the chief sources of lead in local oil-based paints. While local paint companies have eliminated or significantly reduced lead levels in some of their decorative paints, many still contain high

concentrations of lead and are freely sold to the public. Locally manufactured industrial and automobile paints have also remained largely unchanged in lead contents. Compulsory labeling standards of paints by local manufacturers are urgently required for consumer protection, as well legislation to control maximum permissible levels of lead in all decorative paints.

Keywords : lead, paint, unleaded, lead-containing, pigment, lead poisoning, decorative-oil.