

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEAD DISCLOSURE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

This disclosure form is intended to satisfy Federal disclosure requirements under 42 U.S.C. 4852d, as well as the District of Columbia's locally required disclosure requirements under D.C. Official Code § 8-231.01 and § 8-231.04. Under both Federal and District law, lead disclosure must occur before a tenant or purchaser of a pre-1978 residential property is obligated to lease or buy the property.

NOTE: There are some important differences between the Federal disclosure requirements and the District's disclosure requirements. Not all of these differences can be reconciled in the District's Lead Disclosure Form. Accordingly, it is vitally important that you read these instructions carefully, so that you remain in compliance with both Federal and District law pertaining to lead disclosure.

I. WHAT THE DISTRICT'S LEAD DISCLOSURE FORM PROVIDES

The District's Lead Disclosure Form provides:

- The Lead Warning Statement that Federal law requires;
- Notice that any lead-related records or reports must be made available to the prospective tenant or purchaser, as required by both Federal and District law;
- Room for the owner to list relevant details about the location of any known lead-based paint;
- Room for the owner to list relevant details about the location of lead-based paint hazards that the owner reasonably should know about; and
- Room for the owner to list any pending actions related to the property that have been ordered by a District agency.

II. KEY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE DISTRICT LAW AND FEDERAL LAW

- The District's lead law's definition of a "lead-based paint hazard" is different from the Federal definition of the same term. The District's definition of the term includes additional conditions that constitute a lead-based paint hazard, meaning it is stricter than the Federal definition. **Owners who use the District's Lead Disclosure Form to meet the District's requirement for disclosure must use the District law's definition of "lead-based paint hazard" when completing the form.** To help owners complete the form correctly, that definition is included on the form itself, as is the District's definition of the term "presumed lead-based paint," another key term to understand when completing the form. *Illustration: If an owner knows that there is peeling paint on their pre-1978 residential property, that paint is presumed by District law to be*

lead-based paint, and because the paint is in deteriorated condition, it is a lead-based paint hazard under District law and must be listed as such on the District's Lead Disclosure Form.

- District law requires the owner to disclose information related to the property about the presence of lead-based paint, lead-based paint hazards, and any pending actions ordered by a District agency, whenever such information is “reasonably known to the owner.” In contrast, Federal law only requires information about the presence of “known” lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards to be disclosed. In other words, the District’s requirements are stricter than the Federal requirements, regarding what the owner must disclose. **To satisfy District law, an owner must not only disclose what they actually know about the presence of lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards on their property, but they must also disclose what it is reasonable for them to know about such presence.** *Illustration: If an owner has not given his or her pre-1978 property a new coat of paint in the past twenty years, it is reasonable for the owner to know that the paint is no longer in intact condition. Therefore, the owner must disclose that lead-based paint hazards are present on the interior and/or the exterior of the property, in the form of deteriorated presumed lead-based paint.*
- The Federal disclosure requirements apply to “target housing,” a smaller category of housing than District law applies to. “Target housing” is a term that means pre-1978 residential properties, but that excludes “housing for the elderly or persons with disabilities (unless any child who is less than 6 years of age resides or is expected to reside in such housing) or any 0-bedroom dwelling [which are dwellings in which the living area is not separated from the sleeping area, such as efficiencies, studio apartments, dormitories, military barracks, and rentals of individual rooms in residential dwellings].” In contrast, the District’s disclosure requirements apply to pre-1978 “dwelling units,” which is a term that means “a room or a group of rooms that form a single independent habitable unit for permanent occupation by one or more individuals, that has living facilities with permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, and sanitation.”

The District has the same exception as the Federal exception, with respect to housing for the elderly or designated exclusively for persons with disabilities that does not contain a child under 6 years of age, and the following additional 3 exceptions: “[1] A unit within a hotel, motel, or seasonal or transient facility, unless such unit is or will be occupied by a person at risk for a period exceeding 30 days; [2] an area within the dwelling unit that is secured and accessible only to authorized personnel; [and 3] an unoccupied dwelling unit that is to be demolished, provided that the dwelling unit will remain unoccupied until demolition.” Note that the Federal exception for “0-bedroom dwelling” is not an exception under District law. **Key point: if you are submitting the District’s Lead Disclosure Form with the intent to satisfy both Federal and District disclosure requirements, an initial exemption from the requirement of submitting the form in cases involving pre-1978 residential housing is the one having to do with housing designated for the elderly or for the disabled.**

- Both Federal and District law require the owner to submit a completed Lead Disclosure Form prior to the purchaser or tenant being obligated under a contract to purchase or lease the dwelling unit. However, **Federal law and District law have different exceptions that apply, in addition**

to the above-mentioned initial exemption, and they can also exempt the owner from having to submit a completed disclosure form:

Exceptions under Federal law

- ✓ Sales of pre-1978 residential housing at foreclosure;
- ✓ Leases of pre-1978 residential housing that have been found to be lead-based paint free by a certified lead inspector;
- ✓ Short-term leases of 100 days or less, where no lease renewal or extension can occur; and
- ✓ Renewals of existing leases in pre-1978 residential housing in which the lessor has previously disclosed all information required by the Federal disclosure requirements related to the presence of known lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards.

Exceptions under District law

- ✓ When the owner has a report from a risk assessor or an inspector certifying that a dwelling unit is a lead-free unit, the owner may provide that report instead of a completed disclosure form; and
- ✓ When the owner has three clearance reports issued at least twelve months apart and within the previous seven years, and the property was not and is not subject to any housing code violations that occurred during the past five years or any that are outstanding, the owner may provide those clearance reports instead of a completed disclosure form.

If one of the above exception scenarios exists, the owner must make sure the exception applies to the disclosure situation. For example, if District law requires that the Lead Disclosure Form be completed and submitted, an owner cannot use one of the exceptions provided by Federal law to avoid submitting the completed form. Conversely, an owner who is required by Federal law to disclose the known presence of lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards cannot use an exception created by District law to avoid submitting the federally required information.

- If an owner learns of the presence of lead-based paint in a dwelling unit, District law requires the owner to:
 - ✓ Notify the tenant of the presence of lead-based paint within 10 days after discovering its presence; and
 - ✓ Provide the tenant with (1) the Federal Lead Warning Statement that is currently printed at the top of the District's Lead Disclosure Form, and with (2) the lead hazard information pamphlet entitled *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home* (EPA-747-K-94-001). However, if the tenant has already received the Warning Statement and the pamphlet within the prior 12 month period, then the owner does not have to provide them again during this same time period.

III. ADDITIONAL DISCLOSURE REQUIREMENTS UNDER FEDERAL LAW

Providing the Lead Disclosure Form does not conclude an owner's obligations under related Federal law. Federal law requires that the following additional disclosure-related requirements also be met:

- The seller or lessor must provide the purchaser or lessee with an EPA-approved lead hazard information pamphlet, such as the EPA pamphlet entitled *Protect Your Family From Lead in Your Home* (EPA-747-K-94-001).
- The seller or lessor must disclose information about the presence of any known lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards, as well as the existence of any available records or reports pertaining to such presence, not just to the purchaser or lessee, but also to each agent involved in the process. The term "agent" is defined as "any party who enters into a contract with a seller or lessor, including any party who enters into a contract with a representative of the seller or lessor, for the purpose of selling or leasing target housing [except for] purchasers or any purchaser's representative who receives all compensation from the purchaser."
- The Federal disclosure law requires owners to give prospective purchasers and tenants a 10-day opportunity to conduct a risk assessment or inspection to determine whether lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards are present, prior to a purchase and sale agreement or a lease being executed. Owners of residential property in the District of Columbia must also follow this additional requirement imposed by Federal law.
- The Federal disclosure law requires lessors to provide lessees with available records or reports pertaining to lead-based paint and/or lead-based paint hazards, but permits owners to submit report summaries under certain circumstances.¹ Lengthy court documents and construction documents may be excerpted, provided that all information regarding lead-based paint and lead-based paint hazards is included along with sufficient background information, so that the context of the excerpt is clear. For paint inspection and risk assessment reports, EPA and HUD have determined that lessors may provide lessees with a summary of all paint inspection and risk assessment reports, provided that the summary is prepared by a certified paint inspector or risk assessor. Where information about specific units is inconsistent with the conclusions as a whole, this information must be included along with the summary of general conclusions. In situations where documents are excerpted or summarized, they must be accompanied by a list of all complete records and reports available to the lessee. If the lessor chooses to provide excerpts or summaries and document lists in lieu of complete copies, the lessor must provide the lessee with the opportunity to review the complete documents in a central location on the premises, if feasible, and the opportunity to receive copies of any documents not provided, upon request, and at no cost to the lessee.
- The Federal disclosure law requires owners to attach its required disclosure materials, including the Federal Lead Warning Statement, to the sales or leasing contract before a purchaser or lessee is obligated under a contract to purchase or lease pre-1978 residential housing. District law does not require that this information be attached to sales or leasing contracts, only that it be provided before the buyer or renter is obligated. But whenever Federal law is more stringent than local

law, Federal law applies, and therefore owners of residential property in the District of Columbia who want to submit only one disclosure form to satisfy both Federal and District requirements must follow the additional requirement imposed by Federal law, of attaching the Lead Disclosure Form to the sales or leasing contract.

¹ Interpretative Guidance for the Real Estate Community on the Requirements for Disclosure of Information Concerning Lead-based Paint in Housing, August 20, 1996, page 6, answer to question 13.