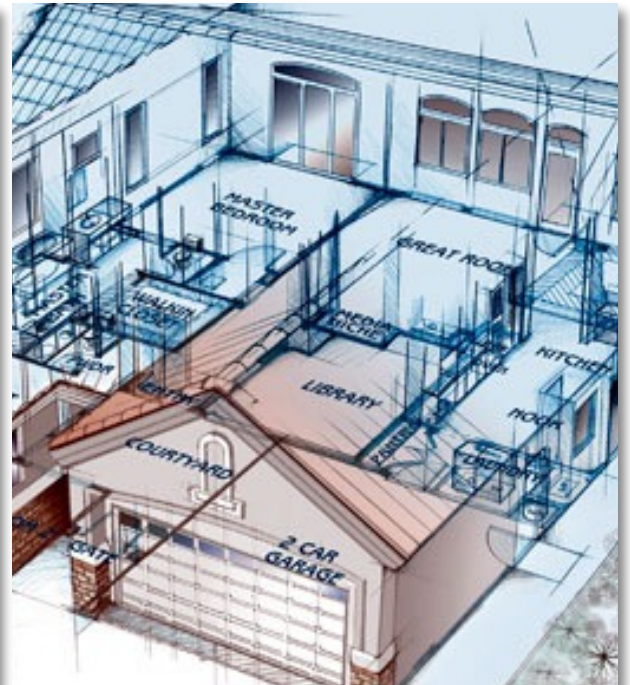


Unhealthy Remodeling By-Products



Remodeling hazards to be concerned about

Remodeling your home can release dangerous chemicals into the air. Asbestos, formaldehyde and other organic solvents, and leaded paint dust all pose health hazards.

How are these materials released?

- ▶ Removing paint can release particulates into the air which contain lead.
- ▶ Deteriorating, asbestos containing insulation can release the chemicals into the air with age. Damaging or attempting to remove such insulation will also have the same effect.
- ▶ Formaldehyde can be outgassed (given off as vapors or fumes) by glue, plywood, paneling, and furniture.
- ▶ Dust and other irritants can be spread throughout the house during remodeling.

What can be done to maintain healthy indoor air quality when remodeling?

- ▶ Do not disturb lead or asbestos containing materials. It is best to cover such materials to minimize exposure. If you are going to remodel, seek professional help to safely dispose of hazardous materials.
- ▶ Pay attention to clean-up during and after remodeling. Wear a respirator or face mask and sweep/vacuum work areas to reduce the spread of dust around the house.
- ▶ Make sure your work area has proper ventilation.
- ▶ Formaldehyde can be detected by its strong "pickle-like" odor. Professionals can also be hired to detect elevated formaldehyde levels.
- ▶ Varnish can be used to safely seal formaldehyde vapors and prevent outgassing from furniture.

Information provided by the Federal Citizen's Information Center, U.S. General Services Administration, Healthy Indoor Air for America's Homes (an educational module), EPA and USDA 1997