Occupational Licensing Review

Ohio Department of Health Lead Licensure

July 17, 2025

Agency Questionnaire

1.Agency Name: Ohio Department of Health

2.Point of Contact – Lisa Griffin Chapa, Director of Government Affairs

3.Describe the board's primary purpose, goals and objectives, and licenses issued.

Background: Lead can damage nearly every system in the human body and has harmful effects on both adults and children. It is a serious environmental public health threat to children in Ohio.

There is no safe level of lead in blood, and lead poisoning can have devastating and lifelong effects on children. Managed by ODH, the Ohio Healthy Homes and Lead Poisoning Prevention Program tested just over 168,000 children for toxic lead in 2024 (preliminary numbers), **finding 4,531 with confirmed elevated blood-lead levels and 1,138 with confirmed lead poisoning**.

Children can be exposed to lead in many ways, but most exposure happens when children put things into their mouths while playing. Lead was used in house paint until 1978, and any house built before that year could have lead paint. Chips from this paint can be ingested or ground into dust, which can be eaten or breathed in. Lead can also be found in soil, water, and certain items that come from other countries. Many children with lead poisoning have no signs at first, which makes it hard to diagnose and treat their poisoning early.

Even small amounts of lead can cause learning and behavior problems in children. Lead replaces iron and calcium and affects many parts of the body, especially the nervous system. Lead is most harmful to children under the age of six, because a child's growing body takes up lead easily. Lead can also be dangerous to a baby during pregnancy. Problems related to lead poisoning can last the child's whole life. Even at low levels, lead can lower IQ, cause attention disorders, make it difficult for a child to pay attention in school, delay growth, impair hearing, and more.

The Ohio Department of Health Lead Licensing and Accreditation Program ensures that the public receives safe and proper lead abatement, detection and analytical services.

The program licenses: lead risk assessors, lead abatement contractors, lead abatement workers, lead inspectors, lead project designers, and clearance technicians.

In addition, this program approves initial and refresher lead training courses. The program approves lead abatement systems and products (encapsulants), clinical laboratories that analyze blood lead levels in humans and environmental lead analytical laboratories that analyze the amount of lead in the environment.

For reference: ORC 3742.05 Lead abatement – Issuing Licenses.

4.Describe the board's annual workload. How many staff are employed?

Lead licensees perform over 5,000 regulated activities performed per year. Program ensures regulatory compliance. ODH processes 1,100+ license application annually, along with providing accreditation to training courses, analytical and environmental laboratories. ODH ensures compliance and also performs records reviews of the documentation required related to the lead abatement activities. Education and compliance assistance is provided to licensees on a regular and ongoing basis. ODH lead licensure program addresses queries and provides education to the public related to the health hazards of lead and proper lead hazard reduction techniques. ODH staff also receives and processes lead abatement tax credit applications.

The lead program also provides high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuums for loan to the general public through health and housing agencies. The program dispenses information and educational pamphlets about lead poisoning and its prevention upon request as well as conducts training sessions for lead professionals, training providers, landlords, tenants, real estate agents, remodelers, licensed personnel, medical personnel and the general public.

Staff: 5.7 FTE

5.How many new licenses does the board issue annually? How many renewed licenses are issued annually? How much does a new license cost? How much does a renewal cost?

1,150 individual licenses and 133 lead laboratories annually. 42 training courses are renewed every three years. Initial and renewal fees are the same.

	Current Fee	Renewal Period
Lead Clearance Technician	$250	Biennial
Lead Inspector	$250	Biennial
Lead Abatement Contractor	$500	Biennial
Lead Risk Assessor	$250	Biennial
Lead Abatement Project Designer	$500	Biennial
Lead Abatement Worker	$50	Biennial
Lead Laboratory	$300	Annual
Lead Initial Training	$750	Tri-annual
Lead Refresher training Course	$250	Tri-annual

6.In the past 5 years, has there been any consideration to lower the licensure cost?

No, the fees are the same as when the program was initially created in 1994.

7.How much revenue is procured from the licensure fees? What does this revenue fund?

Approximately $400,000 - funds a portion of the lead licensing program work helping Ohioans to prevent childhood lead poisoning.

8.Are there any federal regulations, or regulations required to be met outside of the existing licensure requirements that have to be complied with? Does federal law require the board to be renewed in some form?

ODH is authorized by the US EPA to implement the lead abatement and licensing program. The ODH program is required to be as stringent as the federal regulations.

9.Does the board issue an examination prior to licensure? Does the board issues continuing education courses? If so, how often is continuing education necessary? If the examination or continuing education requirements are done outside the board then what determines the selection of an outside organization to host it?

Examination is required for initial licensure and provided by a third-party vendor. Continuing education is required to be completed during the two-year licensing period. Third party testing vendor is awarded via. a competitive bid process.

10.How many other states regulate the occupation or occupations under the board's jurisdiction? Is a license required to engage in that occupation or those occupations in other states?

All 50 states require licensure or certification. Thirty-nine states have been delegated authority by the US EPA, to implement regulatory programs regarding lead as outlined in the Toxic Substance Control Act. The remaining 11 states are regulated directly by the US EPA.

11.Has the operation of the board inhibited economic growth, reduced efficiency, or increased the cost of government?

No, the program protects public health and safety and serves to reduce childhood lead poisoning.

12.Are there any licenses that are no longer issued by the board?

Lead training manager has never been an issued occupational license.

13.Is there anything that the board would like to see changed or implemented in regards to occupational licensing within the scope of this legislative review?

Not at this time, but ODH is continuously thinking through program improvements that would benefit Ohioans.

14.Has the board recommended statutory changes to the general assembly that would benefit the public as opposed to the persons regulated by the board, if any, and have those recommendations and other policies been adopted and implemented?

Many lead abatement-related items and funding have previously been proposed in the Executive Proposed versions of the budget bills since 2019. These provisions and funding benefit the public and reduce childhood lead poisoning.

15.Is the preservation of the board and the board's licenses necessary to protect the public's health, safety, or welfare?

Yes, education requirements, compliance assistance and regulatory enforcement all serve to protect public health and reduce childhood lead poisoning in Ohio.

16.Could the public be protected or served in an alternate or less restrictive manner? If applicable, please identify any licenses or functions of the board that could be eliminated or consolidated.

The program is required to be as stringent as federal requirements.

17.Any additional notes or comments the board believes the committee should be aware of?

No.