

## Risk Assessment Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

*Updated April 20, 2020*

### What does a State-certified Risk Assessment entail?

A State-certified Risk Assessment for housing is an assessment of the potential presence of at least two hazards, but may be three:

1. **Lead**:

- Soil samples are taken outside of the unit in random areas. Additional samples are collected from the drip line (a line on the ground in the same vertical plane as the outside edge of a structure's roof) and/or bare soil areas. Soil sampling removes a small "plug" of soil from the ground.
- Lead dust samples are taken via a sampling wipe from doorways, window sills, bare floors (high traffic areas not carpeted), kitchens, bathrooms, etc. The lead assessor will arrive on site and perform a visual assessment looking for chipping, peeling or degraded surfaces. After the visual portion is done, the assessor will take dust samples from each room using a swipe cloth; the dust samples will then be sent to a lab for evaluation.
- Paint chips are removed if there is evidence of peeling paint -- normally from an inconspicuous area if available. Regardless as to whether chipping paint is present or not, all surfaces are tested for Lead Base Paint using an X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyzer. XRF is a non-destructive analytical technique used to determine the elemental composition of materials. XRF analyzers determine the chemistry of a sample by measuring the fluorescent (or secondary) X-ray emitted from a sample when it is excited by a primary X-ray source.

2. **Asbestos**: Asbestos sampling is taken from any suspected exposed area. The sample area is encapsulated per Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) standards.

3. **Radon**: A short term radon test kit is left in the housing unit basement or crawlspace, undisturbed for a minimum of 48 hours, but no more than 72 hours. Residents are instructed not to disturb the test kit. Not all houses may need a radon assessment.

### What is the difference between an inspection and risk assessment?

An inspection is a surface-by-surface investigation to determine whether there is lead-based paint in a home or child-occupied facility, and where it is located. Inspections can be legally performed only by certified inspectors or risk assessors. Lead-based paint inspections determine the presence of lead-based paint. It is particularly helpful in determining whether lead-based paint is present prior to purchasing, renting, or renovating a home, and identifying potential sources of lead exposure at any time.

A risk assessment is an on-site investigation to determine the presence, type, severity, and location of lead-based paint hazards (including lead hazards in paint, dust, and soil) and provides suggested ways to control them. Risk assessments can be legally performed only by certified risk assessors. Lead-based paint risk assessments are particularly helpful in determining sources of current exposure and in designing possible solutions. You can also have a combined inspection

and risk assessment. With any of these options, the risk assessor or inspector will provide you with a written report of findings.

### **What spaces will be accessed during a Risk Assessment?**

The entire housing unit will be accessed - all rooms, closets, basements, storage areas, attached garages, adjacent structures, etc.

### **How much time is required to complete an assessment?**

The amount of time will vary depending on the size and age of the home and what is or may be encountered. Assessments are typically completed within two to eight hours. Multiple visits to your unit may be required to patch and seal any wall or surface sample holes. Your local housing staff will communicate these needs during the initial assessment.

### **Who needs to be present during the assessment?**

Residents are not required to be present, but they may remain in the home during the assessment if they choose. If the resident is unable to be present, the Housing Representative or Local Housing Office should be notified so that a command representative can escort the risk assessor for the duration of the assessment in your unit.

### **Are residents required to make any preparations?**

The state-certified risk assessor will require unobstructed access to each room or space, including the garage, basement, exterior areas, crawlspace, and stairs. In addition, baseboards should be accessible. There is no need to move furniture. Residents should not clean horizontal surfaces prior to assessment. This will help ensure that accurate test samples are collected.

### **How much damage/repair can be expected as a result of an assessment?**

Risk assessors should not cause any damage to visible areas. However, if damage does occur, residents should immediately report this damage to the Local Housing Officer.

### **How long after the assessment is complete will the results be available to residents?**

The report will be completed and submitted to the Coast Guard no more than 14 days after receipt of laboratory sample results.

### **How do I review the assessment findings of my housing unit?**

Contact the Area Housing Office for the results for your unit.