

Fresno County J.D. Home Rentals to pay \$75,000 for Failure to Inform tenants about potential lead hazards

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Firm to replace windows with energy efficient models in rental properties

“Nearly one million children in America today have dangerous levels of lead in their blood, and old household paint is the primary source,” said Jared Blumenfeld, Regional Administrator of EPA’s Pacific Southwest region. “It is crucial for landlords to provide information about lead hazards so that tenants can protect their families from lead poisoning.”

Under the settlement, the firm who owns and manages the properties is required to pay a \$7,500 penalty and must spend \$67,500 on window replacements at its properties. Testing is to be conducted at the properties and windows found to contain lead will be replaced with energy efficient ones. The project must be completed within one year and every three months J.D. Home Rentals must report back to EPA on its progress.

EPA inspectors found that the firm failed to provide information to tenants about prior lead hazards before leasing certain units. In addition, J.D. Home Rentals did not have tenants sign forms showing that they received disclosures about lead. These failures resulted in violations of the federal Toxic Substances Control Act.

The 12 properties where the violations were identified serve predominately low income, Latino and Hmong families. Of the 31 violations discovered, more than half were at units occupied by children under the age of six years. This inspection was one of several that EPA conducted at property management firms throughout Fresno County that rent older housing that may have significant risk of lead hazards. EPA places a high priority on addressing environmental health risks that disproportionately affect children and environmental justice communities.

The federal government banned lead-based paint from housing in 1978. Children under six years of age are among the most vulnerable to the harmful effects from lead-based paint and lead hazards. Health problems from exposure to lead can include profound developmental and neurological impairment in children.

Federal law requires that persons and entities that sell or rent housing built before 1978 provide lead hazard information to buyers or tenants. In addition, contractors who work on such housing or child-occupied facilities must be certified by EPA if they perform significant renovation, repair or painting.

For additional information on lead in paint, dust and soil and the Toxic Substances Control Act requirements, please visit the EPA web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/lead/>