

EPA Cites Realty Company for Violating Federal Law on Notice of Lead-based Paint Hazards in Reading, Pa.

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PHILADELPHIA (March 26, 2012) -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has cited Crespo Realty, Inc., of Flushing, N.Y., for allegedly violating a federal law requiring the company to disclose information on lead-based paint hazards to tenants renting four Reading, Pa. properties.

The Disclosure Rule under the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act requires sellers and landlords of residential housing built before 1978 (when lead-based paint was banned under federal law) to disclose to purchasers and tenants the presence of known lead-based paint hazards (or lack of knowledge of hazards). Landlords must provide a lead hazard information pamphlet; provide a standard warning statement in the lease on the dangers of lead-based paint; and include disclosure and acknowledgment language in leases.

According to EPA's complaint, Crespo Realty, Inc. did not provide the required lead hazard information and lead hazard disclosures in five leases in four residential properties in Reading. EPA will propose a penalty for these alleged violations after giving the company an opportunity to respond to the complaint. However, the complaint notes that the statutory maximum penalty for violations of the Disclosure Rule is \$11,000 per violation. Crespo has the right to a hearing to contest the alleged violations.

EPA is cooperating with other federal, state, and local agencies to protect tenants and homeowners from the health risks of lead-based paint. High blood levels of lead can cause permanent damage to the nervous system and widespread health problems, such as a reduced intelligence and attention span, hearing loss, stunted growth, reading and learning problems and behavioral difficulties. Young children, in particular, are most vulnerable because their nervous systems are still developing.

For more information on environmental, health, and legal issues involving lead, please visit <http://www.epa.gov/lead/index.html>.

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/opa/admpress.nsf/0/28BC9279DF75B33E852579CD005EAC85>