

# Bridgeport property owner fined for paint

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Published 11:03 p.m., Wednesday, April 11, 2012 The owner of rental properties in Bridgeport is facing up to \$127,150 in Environmental Protection Agency penalties for violating federal lead paint disclosure rules.

According to a complaint filed by EPA's New England office, [Juan Hernandez](#) allegedly violated lead-based paint disclosure requirements seven times when he rented apartment units in Bridgeport between 2008 and 2010. During the EPA's investigation, all of the apartment buildings owned by Hernandez were located in potential environmental justice areas.

He's also charged with failing to give tenants required lead hazard information pamphlets, failing to include lead warning statements in leases, failing to disclose any known lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards, and failing to provide records or reports pertaining to lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards.

Lead is a toxic metal that can cause a variety of health problems, ranging from learning disabilities to seizures and even death. Children 6 and younger are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the metal. Exposure to lead is typically due to the presence of deteriorating lead-based paint, lead-contaminated dust and lead-contaminated residential soil.

In the '80s, lead was phased out of paint, but many homes in New England still contain lead paints.

Late Wednesday afternoon, [Elaine Ficarra](#), spokeswoman for Bridgeport Mayor [Bill Finch](#), issued the following statement: "We were aware of and reported the violations found in Mr. Hernandez' units to the EPA. In the intervening time, our Lead Program staff has worked with Mr. Hernandez to initiate lead-abatement procedures in some of the units to bring them into compliance. We will continue to monitor the situation."

Ficarra did not know how many city properties Hernandez owns.

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