

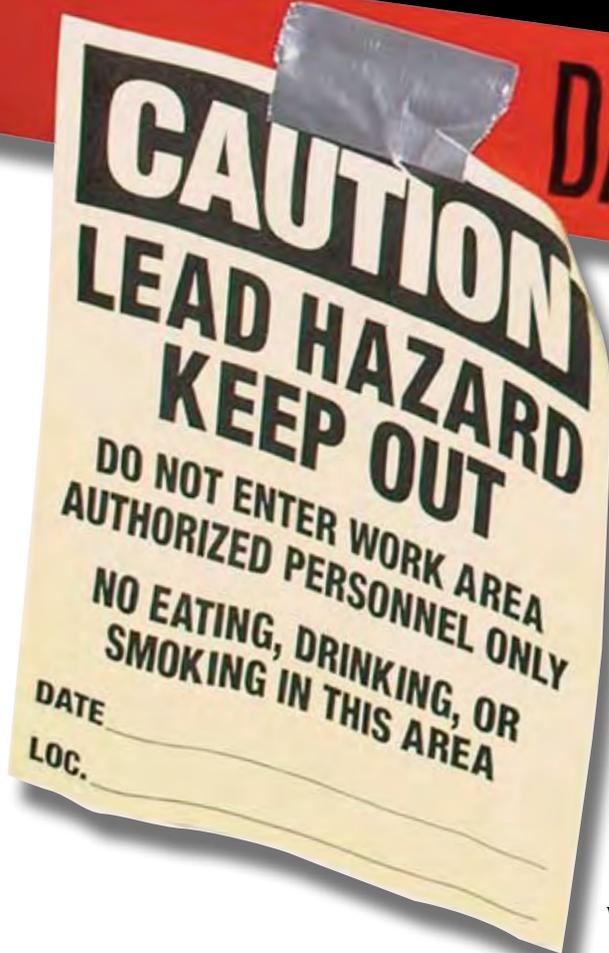
What Will Door Dealers Charge for Lead-Safe Work?

And Other Results From Our Nationwide Survey

Many garage door dealers plan to charge \$200 or more for following the EPA's lead-safe work practices, according to a new Door & Access Systems national survey of garage door dealers.

That's just one of several findings of two nationwide polls of garage door dealers, conducted between April 24 and May 12, 2010.

By Tom Wadsworth, Editor



20%: Fully Certified Already

In our first survey, we sent e-mail invitations to 2,071 door dealers from coast to coast, and 431 responded. The survey asked, "What is the current status of your company with respect to becoming certified to work on pre-1978 homes and buildings that are affected by the lead-based paint rule?"

In short, 20 percent said they are already a certified firm and have a certified renovator. Another 60 percent plan to get certified.

"Being certified already has allowed us to advertise as such, thus giving us an advantage over our competition," said Dave Novak of D&R Garage Doors Plus in Youngstown, Ohio.

20%: No Plans to Get Certified

But a full 20 percent said they have no plans to get certified. "In this economy, we can't afford all the upfront costs for training, certification, and equipment," said a Missouri dealer.

Several others also indicated that they will also decline to do work on pre-1978 homes. "We will not take that job," said a Texas dealer. A Minnesota dealer added, "My company will walk away and not take the risk."

The Impact of RRP

How much garage door business will be affected by this new rule? To find out, we conducted a separate survey of 426 of the dealers who responded to the first survey, and 268 completed the second survey.

We asked, "Of all the residential garages you work on in an average week, what percentage of these garages were probably built before 1978?"

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The answers varied widely, from 0 percent all the way to 100 percent. Some markets have a high percentage of older housing, such as many areas in New England and the Northeast. However, most dealers said that a small portion of their residential work dealt with pre-1978 structures.

In Most Markets, Less Impact

Specifically, 42 percent of dealers said that pre-1978 garages made up only 10 percent or less of their total residential work. Fifty-five percent of dealers said the number of pre-1978 structures equals 30 percent or less, and 89 percent of dealers said 50 percent or less.

Thus, in most garage door markets, the RRP Rule affects a relatively small portion of a door dealer's work. Further, even in areas with many older homes, most of the pre-1978 garage doors have already been replaced, according to several respondents to our survey.

"I believe the number of times we actually will have to deal with lead-based paints will be rare," said David Ziegenhorn of Garage Door Co. of Sikeston, Mo. Ziegenhorn noted that he has taken the RRP certification course and assessed its impact on his market.

What Will You Charge?*

In this same survey completed by 268 door dealers, we asked, "If you were hired to replace one 16x7 door using the EPA's lead paint procedures, how much more would that customer probably pay for that job?"

A full 55 percent checked the box that said, "We don't know yet." Since the RRP Rule is so new and since so few have been certified, most dealers haven't had the opportunity to analyze the costs involved.

Yet, 45 percent of our respondents provided a specific amount, and those amounts varied widely. Of the respondents who provided an amount, 11 percent said they would add no charge to their bill. Another 29 percent said the amount charged would be between \$10 and \$100.

Our survey provided check-boxes with varying amounts from \$0 up to a maximum of \$200. The largest group of respondents (42%) said they would charge \$200. Some commented that "\$200 is not enough." A few said that the actual charge would be as much as \$500, \$700, or even \$1,500.

A Dim View of Extra Charges

Several dealers were not optimistic about customers being willing to pay extra. "Any cost would probably lose the sale," said a California dealer. "Ten guys doing business in our area don't even know the EPA, and customers will buy from them."

"We have been turned away from all possible lead-based paint jobs before we even discussed fees," added a Texas dealer. "This is ridiculous."

"Most people, (perhaps) 80-90 percent, will not replace their doors when they find out the added cost," said a dealer from Massachusetts.

One Arizona garage door veteran commented, "The way our industry prices its products and services, I'd guess that prices would go down instead of up. I hope I am wrong."

A Closer Cost Analysis

Several respondents said they have taken the EPA's RRP training and analyzed the costs closely. But dealers had widely varying estimates of the extra time required.

"I just completed the training to become certified yesterday. It looks like about two hours of additional time if you follow all of the guidelines," said a Missouri dealer. "Remember, if the installer is not certified, you must send a certified installer out twice at least."

A Virginia dealer estimated that "full to-the-letter compliance will change a two-man-hour job into a 20-man-hour job." He said they would pass on the extra cost to the homeowner.

"We estimate one additional hour of setup and 1-1/2-hour teardown, with cleanup and disposal at a special dump," said a dealer in southeast Florida.

And More Costs ...

A Minneapolis dealer figures "about 4-6 hours for setup, cleanup, recordkeeping, pre- and post-inspection, disposal, and testing." He added that he may charge \$400-\$600. "I have no intention of subsidizing this."

Others noted the importance of considering additional costs for special insurance, getting trained and certified, expensive HEPA vacuums, plastic sheeting, personal protective equipment, "covering a bunch of junk in the garage," and possible special landfill costs.

Some Florida dealers may have an additional burden because wind-load requirements may expand the square footage of disturbed area.

"We usually have to demolish the existing 2x4 jamb pads, cut back the drywall, and install new 2x6 yellow pine jamb pads," said Mark Marcilliat of Overhead Door of the Florida Panhandle in Pensacola. "This woodwork is far more likely to bring the job under RRP rule requirements than the replacement of the door."

A Rhode Island dealer, who is subject to special state laws for RRP, said, "They want independent third-party verification that there is no lead residue. This alone would have to add at least \$100."

"Then there's still the risk of someone else saying you didn't do a good enough job and that costing you tens of thousands of dollars," added an Arizona dealer. "\$200 is not high enough."

Favoring the Tailgater

A common complaint from many dealers is that these added costs will end up favoring one-man, out-of-the-back-of-the-truck operations that pay no attention to EPA regulations.

"This will be one of those situations that allow the tailgaters access to more business," said a dealer in Baton Rouge, La.

"Ethical garage door dealers will once again lose ground to those who refuse to comply with the EPA's Lead Paint Program," added Greg Schults of Crawford Door Sales of Salt Lake City, Utah.

Dealers Sound Off

Our survey gave dealers the opportunity to sound off about the new regulations. In an optional question at the end of the survey, we asked, "If you could get one comment about the Lead Paint Rule published in Door & Access Systems magazine, what would that comment be?"

Almost 90 dealers were eager to sound off. Most were pointedly critical of the regulations, and some noted the poor timing.

"Considering the state of the economy, adding additional cost to meet the EPA standard ... puts a hardship on the homeowner and the



Do You Intend to Comply?

“What is the current status of your company with respect to becoming certified to work on pre-1978 homes and buildings that are affected by the lead-based paint rule?”

- **33.6%** We have not obtained any certification, but we plan to get certified.
- **19.7%** We have not obtained any certification, and we have no plans to get certified.
- **19.5%** We are a certified firm, and we have at least one employee who is a certified renovator.
- **17.9%** We have not obtained any certification, but we have applied to become certified.
- **8.4%** Other.
- **0.9%** We are a certified firm, but we do not yet have an employee who is a certified renovator.

E-mail invitations to this online survey were sent to 2,071 door dealers, and 431 responded. The survey was conducted from April 24 to May 3, 2010.

garage door company,” said Ron Boyter of Precision Door’s headquarters in Titusville, Fla.

An Indiana dealer added that even the EPA doesn’t seem to be prepared for its own regulations. “Very few inspectors have been certified,” said Joe Jennings of Hoosier Door, Oolitic, Ind. “The (implementation) date should have been extended. We were able to get our certification, but most have not. They didn’t even have enough booklets at our training.”

Blaming the Lawyers

Besides blaming the EPA, respondents also pointed a few barbs at lawyers. “The entire scenario benefits the legal profession the most, and it provides yet another chilling effect on business and job creation,” said Gregory Fisher of Maryville Glass and Lock in Maryville, Mo.

“Just watch all the law firm ads seeking out potential clients for a variety of claims,” observed David Ferguson of Marathon Door and Glass in Hopedale, Mass. “A future ad will be, ‘Do you suffer from the effects of lead poisoning? If so, call the law firm of Wie, Skruem, and Howe for a no-obligation consultation.’”

“Fear Your Government”

In an era of massive government spending and the emergence of the Tea Party movement, the most popular target of criticism was the government.

“I am tired of government justifying their existence by making laws that they can’t enforce without adding more layers of bureaucracy,” said Rick Witters of Cressy Door of Shoreline, Wash. “All this in a down economy and when we have a deficit budget.”

“Like most other government over-wrought regulations, this Lead Paint Rule will save few if any lives, but will cost the public hundreds of thousands of dollars,” added Scott Parnell of The Door Store in Liberal, Kan.

Michael Carr of Garage Door Service, Newtown Square, Pa., probably summarized the feeling of many dealers when he simply wrote, “Love your country, but fear your government.” ■

* Legal disclaimer: In this story, Door & Access Systems is merely reporting what independent dealers are saying about their expected charges. We are not recommending any particular charge amount.

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