

## CPCB norms seek to cap lead content in paints at 90 ppm

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*Old stocks may be allowed to be sold for two years*

New Delhi, March 28:

Nearly six months after the government decided to limit the lead content in household paints, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on Tuesday came out with guidelines on compliance and testing procedures.

The CPCB has invited comments on this draft report by April 17. Old paint stocks will, however, be allowed to be sold for another two years after the CPCB norms come into force.

Despite serious environmental and health concerns around exposure to lead, India did not have any regulations on the heavy metal until the Regulation of Lead Contents in Household and Decorative Paints Rules, 2016, were announced last November. The Bureau of Indian Standards has recommended that paint-makers keep the lead content under 90 ppm.

“Children’s developing brains are permanently harmed by exposure to lead. One key impact is reduction in IQ score, which is correlated with decreases in lifetime earning potential. For the nation as a whole population-wide reductions in IQ means greater social costs and reduced intellectual capital, and other factors that adversely impact India’s economy,” wrote Satish Sinha, Associate Director, Toxics Link, in a report. According to this study, of last May, , high lead exposure is costing India \$236 billion annually.

Another study by the group in 2015 had found that more than 31 per cent of the enamel paint samples it tested had lead concentration of 10,000 ppm. The limit prescribed by BIS under the new regulations is 90 ppm.

Besides, the impact on brain development among children, exposure to lead is also found to cause long-term harm to adults, including increased risk of blood pressure and kidney damage.

According to the draft CPCB guidelines, the Central Power Research Institute, Bengaluru, and its regional centres in Bhopal, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Nagpur, Nashik and Noida will be authorised to carry out the tests on paints.

While new paints have to be pre-tested for conformity to lead content limits by certifying agencies, for existing stocks, manufacturers would be required to self-certify the products by labelling and submit the list to the CPCB.

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