



City of Phoenix

Historic Preservation Office

Paint Removal Methods for Masonry

What is not permitted:

Please be aware that our office does not approve any mechanical (grinders, disks, etc.) or blasting paint removal method (including blasting with soda, peanut or walnut shells, grain hulls, plastic particles, ground silica, etc.). Abrasive and mechanical paint removal methods interact with the building, rather than the paint itself, to remove the paint. As a result, these methods cause damage to the outer "skin" that gives brick its waterproofing protection as well as their associated mortar joints; these methods can also dramatically affect the brick color appearance.

Cleaning with acidic chemical cleaners, particularly those that include hydrofluoric acid or hydrochloric acid, as well as alkaline cleaners containing sodium hydroxide and ammonium bifluoride, also are not recommended since they can dissolve the outer layer of the brick, etch the brick surfaces and/or leave stains.

What is permitted:

Owners of historic buildings should use alkaline or organic based paint removers (other than as noted above) following manufacturer recommended application methods (typically a synthetic brush or roller, an airless sprayer, or spread on the surface via a paste). These products typically require a neutralizer or water wash to ensure that chemicals do not remain on the masonry, and continue to interact with and "eat" into the masonry layers over time. If a water rinse is required, a low to medium (rather than high) pressure water rinse is encouraged to avoid water pressure induced damage to brick surfaces. Keep in mind that the rinse water may create runoff containing chemical and lead residue, and that this may need filtering or containment. We encourage you to use a contractor who has been trained in and uses lead safe work practices.

Testing of various chemical strippers on a small inconspicuous area of a building is highly recommended prior to applying chemicals to the entire building surface. This will help to ensure that the product will be both effective and non-damaging to the masonry surfaces. Please ensure that you follow the directions completely, particularly in terms of neutralization, ventilation and protective gear required. Also note that more than one application may be required when a building has multiple layers of paint.

In terms of picking an appropriate product, it is useful to know the type of paint on the building, i.e., oil/lead based paint, latex paint, etc. Two recommended products are:

- **Peel Away, Dumond Chemicals, Inc. 212-869-6350, dumondchemicals.com.** This company produces Peel Away 1, the preferred product for oil-based lead paint, and Peel Away 7, a product that works on both oil and latex based paint. Peel Away Products are carried by Sherwin Williams Paint Stores locally (sometimes in stock or by special order). A neutralizer is recommended.
- **Diedrich Technologies, 414-764-0058, diedrichtechnologies.com.** This company produces Diedrich 606 Multi-Layer Paint Remover. This product removes oil and latex paints, and is applied with a brush, roller or sprayer. The chemical is neutralized with a water mist application. Information on product purchase is available on the web site and by contacting the company.

There are other alkaline and organic products coming on the market all the time. The above list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of acceptable products. We encourage you to contact our office for approval to use other products that meet the above criteria.

You can contact our office at 602-261-8699 for more information or questions. For more information on lead-safe paint practices, please contact the Neighborhood Service Department's Lead Hazard Control Program at 602-495-5459.