



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

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Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Office of Health Care Quality  
Bland Bryant Building • Spring Grove Center  
55 Wade Avenue • Catonsville, Maryland 21228

**TO:** Comprehensive and Extended Care Facilities  
Domiciliary Care Facilities  
Programs Serving the Developmentally Disabled

**FROM:** Carol Benner, Director Licensing and Certification Administration

**RE:** **Safety Alert - Use of Lead Based Ceramic Glazes In Art Therapy Programs**

**DATE:** February 25, 1998

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The Art and Creative Materials Institute, Inc. ("ACMI") and the Consumer Product Safety Commission have issued the enclosed safety alert for health care facilities concerning the use of ceramic leaded glazes. ACMI points out that it has recently learned of several incidents where nursing home residents in North Carolina ingested ceramic glazes and that one of these incidents resulted in the death of a resident because the family refused treatment.

The Licensing and Certification Administration strongly endorses ACMI's position that only non-toxic products be used by individuals who may not be able to read and understand a product label. Additionally, products should never be removed from their original container to an unmarked one because all of the health and safety information will be lost.

Please review the content of any ceramic glazes you currently use and the procedures for their use to ensure that you have taken every possible step to protect the safety of your residents.

Additional information and answers to specific questions can be obtained by contacting ACMI at (617) 426-6400 or by fax at (617) 753-6185. For general information, visit ACMI's web site at [www.creative-industries.com/acmi](http://www.creative-industries.com/acmi).

CB:blm

NH: 98-002

DOM: 98-001

THE ART & CREATIVE MATERIALS INSTITUTE, INC.  
100 Boylston Street, Suite 1050  
Boston, MA 02116

## **SAFETY ALERT FOR HEALTH CARE FACILITIES**

"Leaded ceramic glazes continue to be inappropriately and dangerously used in some nursing homes and other art therapy programs," said Deborah Fanning, Executive Vice President of The Art & Creative Institute, Inc. (ACMI). Recently, ACMI learned of several incidents where nursing home patients in North Carolina ingested ceramic glazes. According to ACMI's Toxicologist, Dr. Woodhall Stopford, Director of the Occupational Medicine Training Program at Duke University Medical Center, one of these incidents resulted in the death of a patient because the family refused treatment.

Past reports indicated that in some cases liquid leaded ceramic glazes were poured into medicine cups for use by individual patients. The latest cases appear to indicate glazes are being moved to other than their original containers, thus resulting in accidental ingestion. ACMI's Toxicologist, Dr. Stopford, strongly warns against this practice- "Medicine cups should be used for medications, not art materials or other liquids," said Dr. Stopford. "Patients are likely to confuse any liquid contained in a medicine cup with an intended medicine out of habit." In such situations involving seniors or children, materials should not be transferred out of their original containers because it increases the risk of accidental ingestion

Dr. Stopford recommends that lead-containing hobby glazes be used only by individuals who are capable of following safe use instructions. If supervision is required, only lead-free, non-toxic hobby glazes should be used.

Non-toxic ceramic products of ACMI manufacturers, such as some lead-free glazes, can be readily identified by the AP Seal on product labels.

Ceramic products bearing the HL Health Label with cautionary warning labels, such as leaded glazes, can also be readily identified by this HL Health Label

and accompanying health warnings and safe use instructions.

**WARNING:**Contains (specific ingredient and precautionary labeling)

"Schools, nursing homes, and hospitals should purchase only non-hazardous art materials (with no hazard labeling) that indicate they conform to the standard ASTM D-4236," according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. "Health care facility operators and occupational therapists should read the labels of all materials they buy before patients use them in art therapy programs," said Mrs. Fanning. Art and craft programs in health care facilities provide recreation and challenge to patients. It is important these programs are also safe for patients. ACMI-certified leaded glazes are clearly and distinctly labeled with strong warnings. These glazes, as well as other hazardous materials, should never be transferred to unmarked containers and never transferred to a container associated with medications.

To receive a list of ACMI-certified art and craft materials and an informational booklet, or to receive answers to specific questions on materials and safe use, please contact ACMI at 100 Boylston Street, Suite 1050, Boston, MA 02116, Tel. (617) 426-6400, Fax (617) 753-6185. For general information, visit ACMI's web site at [www.creative-industries.com/acmi](http://www.creative-industries.com/acmi).