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## **Laying down the lead laws** **700 properties in Salisbury are not compliant with state reporting requirements**

By Katherine Crowell Staff Writer

SALISBURY -- Roughly 700 registered properties are not compliant with state lead reporting laws, said the Salisbury Department of Neighborhood Services and Code Compliance.

The department's housing supervisor Susan Phillips said the number is significant because those properties are at risk for having unsafe levels of lead.

"It's getting more and more rare for poisoned children to come from compliant properties," said Alison Prost of the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning.

Prost and Phillips were among several presenters at the Eastern Shore Lead Poisoning Prevention Health and Safety Forum held at the Wicomico County Free Library on Wednesday afternoon.

Landlords, building inspectors, health department personnel and others attended the forum to learn about lead safe work practices, state housing laws and resources for pre-1950s property owners and tenants' rights and responsibilities.

"I learned a lot here that I didn't know before," said Jim Wanex, a Salisbury landlord, who attended the event to get more information on compliance requirements.

Salisbury is working with the Maryland Department of Environment in identifying whether dwellings built prior to 1950 are in compliance with state lead reporting laws. If properties are noncompliant, the Neighborhood Services and Code Compliance Department reports the property owners to the state as delinquent owners.

"Once a landlord is designated as a delinquent property owner, the clock starts ticking for the tenant to move out within 60 days or the property to be in compliance," said the department's director Tom Stevenson.

This does not mean that the city is putting tenants out on the street, Stevenson said. The state statutes require owners to find housing for those tenants, he added.

The state requires landlords to register all pre-1950 residential rentals with the state every year. The state registration is separate from any local registrations, said Andrea Baker, Assistant Attorney General for the Maryland Department of the Environment.

If a child is found to have elevated blood lead levels from a particular property, the tenant may be eligible for up to \$9,500 in relocation benefits until the child is 6, and \$7,500 in medical benefits until the child is 18, Baker said.

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