



## Press Release

For Immediate Release

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### CDC Announces Issuance of Patent for Detecting the Presence of Lead

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announces the issuance of a patent for a handwipe that can quickly and easily detect the presence of lead on skin, the steering wheels of vehicles used in metal industries, and surfaces such as tables, floors, walls and window sills.

“This invention is important because it can help protect workers from lead poisoning,” says Andrew Watkins, director, CDC’s technology transfer office. “The handwipe can test a variety of surfaces and indicates the presence of lead through a simple color change. This would alert a worker that there is some level of lead contamination and that he or she should perform more thorough hand washing.”

Lead residues on the hands of workers can be a significant health risk since lead may be ingested during eating, drinking or smoking. Although hand washing, if done carefully, can remove all lead residues, it is difficult for individuals to determine whether hand washing has been thorough enough.

October 20-26 is Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. Lead exposure is a significant environmental hazard which can affect large and diverse segments of the population. For example, exposure can occur to workers involved in the removal of lead-based paint or the renovation of buildings containing lead-based paint, as well as workers in metal industries.

U.S Patent No. 6,248,593 is owned by CDC and is entitled, “Handwipe Disclosing Method for the Presence of Lead.”

Under the federal Technology Transfer Act, government laboratories can patent and license inventions to businesses. Also, federal labs may collaborate with companies on research and development projects. These activities benefit the public by encouraging the development of improved health care products and safety devices.

CDC’s technology portfolio includes tests and vaccines for human and animal diseases, occupational safety and medical devices, and software applications. To learn more about CDC technologies, visit the Web site at [www.cdc.gov/od/ads/techtran/tech.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/od/ads/techtran/tech.htm).

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*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people’s health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES