

EMBARGOED UNTIL 11:30 A.M. (MYT), TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2026

One in Four Paints Tested in Malaysia Exceed Safe Lead Limit as Industry and Consumer Groups Back Mandatory Standard

New study finds lead up to about 1,100 times the safe limit; coalition calls for Malaysia's voluntary standard to be made mandatory

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 October 2026 — One in four household paints tested in Malaysia contain lead above the internationally recognised safe limit of 90 parts per million (ppm), according to a new market study released today by the Lead Exposure Elimination Project (LEEP), the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) and the Malaysian Paint and Coating Manufacturers' Association (MPCMA).

The study tested 122 decorative paint samples from 31 manufacturers, bought from retailers, hardware stores and online platforms across Peninsular and East Malaysia. Thirty-one samples (25.4%) exceeded 90 ppm, and 15 of the 31 manufacturers sold at least one paint above the limit. The highest reading, in a yellow paint, reached about 99,000 ppm, roughly 1,100 times the safe limit. Lead levels were highest in oil-based and aerosol paints, particularly in yellow and red shades.

More than 70% of the paints that exceeded the limit carried no lead information on the can.

Malaysia introduced a voluntary standard, MS 2762, in 2022, setting a 90-ppm limit on lead in decorative paint. Compliance is not legally required. The share of high-lead paints has fallen since CAP's earlier studies in 2016 and 2022, and several manufacturers have reformulated successfully. But the new findings show that voluntary action alone has not removed lead paint from Malaysian shelves.

The coalition is calling for MS 2762 to be made mandatory.

Because lead-free alternatives are already commercially available, the cost of a mandatory standard is small. An independent Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) commissioned by LEEP puts the estimated total cost to industry and government at around US\$11 million over 20 years in today's money, less than a single year of the harm lead paint causes, however that harm is counted. Even under the assessment's conservative scenario, the health and productivity benefits outweigh these costs by 4,059 to one.

These are preliminary, modelled estimates. No Malaysian study has yet measured how much lead exposure comes from paint, so the assessment uses a central estimate of 15%, triangulated from UNEP, WHO and IHME evidence, and a conservative scenario of 10% attribution to lead paint. Benefits would accrue gradually as compliant paint replaces older stock.

Lead exposure causes permanent damage to children's developing brains, lowering educational attainment and lifetime earnings. In adults, it is linked to high blood pressure and heart disease. Symptoms are often mild or absent, so exposure frequently goes undetected. Lead paint becomes a hazard as it ages, breaking down into dust and flakes that children can swallow or inhale.

Mageswari Sangaralingam, Chief Executive of the Consumers' Association of Penang, said:

"Lead exposure, even at low levels, is a serious risk to human health, especially for children, whose developing brains are particularly vulnerable. Lead paint breaks down into dust and flakes that are easily ingested or inhaled, often unknowingly, causing lifelong cognitive and physical harm. We have tested and found lead in Malaysian paint for decades. It is time for the voluntary standard to be made mandatory."

Prescilla Ngan, Honorary Secretary, MPCMA, said:

“Many Malaysian manufacturers have already moved to lead-free production, proving that safe, high-quality and affordable paint can be made locally. MPCMA supports making the 90-ppm limit mandatory, with a reasonable transition period, so that every manufacturer competes on the same terms and every consumer is protected. Responsible manufacturers should not be undercut by those who continue to use lead.”

Ivan Mahardika, Program Manager at LEEP, said:

“The evidence is clear, and so is the solution. Malaysia already has the right direction in MS 2762. Making it mandatory is the step that will protect the next generation of Malaysian children. LEEP will continue to support the Government in this work, and we are offering free technical assistance to any manufacturer that wants to reformulate.”

The study is released as part of LEEP’s campaign for International Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. Full findings are available at leadelimination.org/Malaysia-Paint-Study-2026.

— ENDS —

Notes to editors

About the study: LEEP purchased 122 decorative paint samples, including oil-based, water-based and spray paints, from retailers, hardware stores and e-commerce platforms across Peninsular and East Malaysia. Where available, white, yellow and red shades were selected from each brand. The sample covers at least 85% of Malaysia’s decorative paint market. Dried paint samples were analysed by the Wisconsin Occupational Health Laboratory (WOHL), which is accredited under ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO/IEC 17043 and by the American Industrial Hygiene Association under the US EPA Environmental Lead Laboratory Accreditation Program. WOHL digested the samples in acid and measured total lead content by inductively coupled plasma optical emission spectrometry (ICP-OES), following NIOSH Method 7303. Results are reported in ppm dry weight.

About the RIA: LEEP’s independent Regulatory Impact Assessment estimates the costs and benefits of making MS 2762 mandatory over a 20-year horizon. It identifies the Trade Descriptions Act 2011 as the most direct route, with the Consumer Protection Act 1999 and the Environmental Quality Act 1974 as complementary measures. The assessment presents LEEP’s analysis and does not represent the position of any Government ministry or agency. An executive summary is included in the press kit.

About LEEP: LEEP’s mission is to end childhood lead poisoning. We work globally to eliminate lead exposure at its source, by first identifying lead prevalence through market studies, supporting governments to introduce and enforce lead regulations, and assisting industries to transition to lead-free alternatives.

About CAP: Consumers’ Association of Penang (CAP) is a Malaysian consumer advocacy and public interest organisation focused on consumer rights, public health, environmental protection, and sustainable development.

About MPCMA: Malaysian Paint and Coating Manufacturers’ Association (MPCMA) is the principal industry association representing paint and coating manufacturers in Malaysia, supporting industry standards, technical collaboration, and regulatory engagement.

Media contacts: Ivan Mahardika, LEEP, ivan@leadelimination.org | Izzuan Kayat, Agyl & Partners (Kuala Lumpur), izzuan.k@agylpartners.com, +60 17-371 3667

EMBARGO SEHINGGA 11.30 PAGI (WAKTU MALAYSIA), SELASA, 27 OKTOBER 2026

Satu Daripada Empat Cat Yang Diuji di Malaysia Melebihi Had Plumbum Selamat; Industri dan Kumpulan Pengguna Sokong Piawaian Mandatori

Kajian baharu menemui kandungan plumbum sehingga kira-kira 1,100 kali ganda had selamat; gabungan menggesa piawaian sukarela Malaysia dijadikan mandatori

KUALA LUMPUR, 27 Oktober 2026 — Satu daripada empat cat kediaman yang diuji di Malaysia mengandungi plumbum melebihi had selamat yang diiktiraf di peringkat antarabangsa, iaitu 90 bahagian per sejuta (ppm), menurut kajian pasaran baharu yang dikeluarkan hari ini oleh Lead Exposure Elimination Project (LEEP), Persatuan Pengguna-Pengguna Pulau Pinang (CAP) dan Persatuan Pembuat Cat & Salutan Malaysia (MPCMA).

Kajian tersebut menguji 122 sampel cat hiasan daripada 31 pengeluar, yang dibeli dari peruncit, kedai perkakasan dan platform dalam talian di Semenanjung dan Malaysia Timur. Sebanyak 31 sampel (25.4%) melebihi 90 ppm, manakala 15 daripada 31 pengeluar menjual sekurang-kurangnya satu cat yang melebihi had tersebut. Bacaan tertinggi, pada cat berwarna kuning, mencecah kira-kira 99,000 ppm, iaitu kira-kira 1,100 kali ganda had selamat. Paras plumbum paling tinggi ditemui dalam cat berasaskan minyak dan cat aerosol, terutamanya bagi warna kuning dan merah.

Lebih 70% daripada cat yang melebihi had tidak mempunyai sebarang maklumat plumbum pada tin.

Malaysia memperkenalkan piawaian sukarela MS 2762 pada 2022, yang menetapkan had 90 ppm bagi kandungan plumbum dalam cat hiasan. Pematuhan terhadap piawaian ini tidak diwajibkan oleh undang-undang. Peraturan cat berplumbum tinggi telah menurun berbanding kajian CAP pada 2016 dan 2022, dan beberapa pengeluar telah berjaya mengubah formulasi produk mereka. Namun, dapatan baharu menunjukkan tindakan secara sukarela semata-mata belum berjaya menyingkirkan cat berplumbum daripada pasaran Malaysia.

Gabungan ini menggesa agar MS 2762 dijadikan mandatori.

Oleh kerana alternatif bebas plumbum sudah tersedia secara komersial, kos piawaian mandatori adalah kecil. Penilaian Impak Peraturan (RIA) bebas yang ditauliahkan oleh LEEP menganggarkan bahawa anggaran jumlah kos kepada industri dan Kerajaan sekitar AS\$11 juta dalam tempoh 20 tahun pada nilai semasa, iaitu lebih rendah daripada kemudahan cat berplumbum dalam tempoh setahun, walau bagaimana pun ia dikira. Walaupun berdasarkan senario konservatif penilaian ini, manfaat kesihatan dan produktiviti melebihi kos tersebut dengan nisbah 4,059 berbanding satu.

Angka-angka ini ialah anggaran awal berasaskan model. Belum ada kajian di Malaysia yang mengukur sejauh mana pendedahan plumbum berpunca daripada cat, maka penilaian ini menggunakan anggaran utama sebanyak 15%, yang diperoleh melalui triangulasi bukti daripada UNEP, WHO dan IHME, serta senario konservatif sebanyak 10% atribusi kepada cat berplumbum. Manfaat akan direalisasikan secara beransur-ansur apabila cat yang mematuhi piawaian menggantikan cat lama.

Pendedahan kepada plumbum menyebabkan kerosakan kekal pada perkembangan otak kanak-kanak, sekali gus menjejaskan pencapaian pendidikan dan pendapatan sepanjang hayat mereka. Bagi orang dewasa, ia dikaitkan dengan tekanan darah tinggi dan penyakit jantung. Gejalanya sering ringan atau tidak kelihatan, menyebabkan pendedahan kerap tidak dikesan. Cat berplumbum menjadi bahaya apabila semakin usang, kerana ia terurai menjadi habuk dan serpihan yang boleh tertelan atau tersedut oleh kanak-kanak.

Mageswari Sangaralingam, Ketua Eksekutif Persatuan Pengguna-Pengguna Pulau Pinang, berkata:

“Pendedahan kepada plumbum, walaupun pada tahap rendah, merupakan risiko serius kepada kesihatan manusia, terutamanya kanak-kanak yang otaknya masih berkembang dan amat mudah terjejas. Cat berplumbum terurai menjadi habuk dan serpihan yang mudah tertelan atau tersedut, selalunya tanpa disedari, lalu menyebabkan kemudaratan kognitif dan fizikal sepanjang hayat. Kami telah menguji dan mendapati plumbum dalam cat di Malaysia selama berdekad. Sudah tiba masanya piawaian sukarela ini dijadikan mandatori.”

Prescilla Ngan, Setiausaha Kehormat, MPCMA, berkata:

“Ramai pengeluar Malaysia telah beralih kepada pengeluaran bebas plumbum, membuktikan bahawa cat yang selamat, berkualiti tinggi dan mampu milik boleh dihasilkan di dalam negara. MPCMA menyokong agar had 90 ppm dijadikan mandatori, dengan tempoh peralihan yang munasabah, supaya setiap pengeluar bersaing secara adil dan setiap pengguna dilindungi. Pengeluar yang bertanggungjawab tidak sepatutnya dirugikan oleh pihak yang masih menggunakan plumbum.”

Ivan Mahardika, Pengurus Program LEEP, berkata:

“Buktinya sudah jelas, begitu juga penyelesaiannya. Malaysia sudah pun mempunyai hala tuju yang tepat melalui MS 2762. Menjadikannya mandatori ialah langkah yang akan melindungi generasi kanak-kanak Malaysia akan datang. LEEP akan terus menyokong Kerajaan dalam usaha ini, dan kami menawarkan bantuan teknikal secara percuma kepada mana-mana pengeluar yang ingin mengubah formulasi produk mereka.”

Kajian ini dikeluarkan sempena kempen LEEP bagi Minggu Pencegahan Keracunan Plumbum Antarabangsa. Dapatkan penuh kajian boleh diakses di leadelimination.org/Malaysia-Paint-Study-2026.

— TAMAT —

Nota kepada editor

Tentang kajian: LEEP telah membeli 122 sampel cat hiasan, termasuk cat berasaskan minyak, cat berasaskan air dan cat semburan, dari peruncit, kedai perkakasan dan platform e-dagang di Semenanjung dan Malaysia Timur. Jika ada, warna putih, kuning dan merah dipilih bagi setiap jenama. Sampel ini merangkumi sekurang-kurangnya 85% pasaran cat hiasan Malaysia. Sampel cat yang telah dikeringkan dianalisis oleh Wisconsin Occupational Health Laboratory (WOHL), yang diakreditasi di bawah ISO/IEC 17025 dan ISO/IEC 17043 serta oleh American Industrial Hygiene Association di bawah US EPA Environmental Lead Laboratory Accreditation Program. WOHL mencerna sampel dalam asid dan mengukur jumlah kandungan plumbum menggunakan spektrometri pancaran optik plasma gandingan induktif (ICP-OES), berdasarkan Kaedah NIOSH 7303. Keputusan dilaporkan dalam ppm berat kering.

Tentang RIA: Penilaian Impak Peraturan bebas LEEP menganggarkan kos dan manfaat menjadikan MS 2762 mandatori bagi tempoh 20 tahun. Ia mengenal pasti Akta Perihal Dagangan 2011 sebagai laluan paling langsung, dengan Akta Pelindungan Pengguna 1999 dan Akta Kualiti Alam Sekeliling 1974 sebagai langkah pelengkap. Penilaian ini membentangkan analisis LEEP dan tidak mewakili pendirian mana-mana kementerian atau agensi Kerajaan. Ringkasan eksekutif disertakan dalam kit media.

Tentang LEEP: Misi LEEP ialah menamatkan keracunan plumbum dalam kalangan kanak-kanak. Kami bekerja di seluruh dunia untuk menghapuskan pendedahan plumbum pada puncanya, bermula dengan mengenal pasti kelaziman plumbum melalui kajian pasaran, menyokong kerajaan memperkenalkan dan menguatkuasakan peraturan plumbum, serta membantu industri beralih kepada alternatif bebas plumbum.

Tentang CAP: Persatuan Pengguna-Pengguna Pulau Pinang (CAP) ialah pertubuhan advokasi pengguna dan kepentingan awam Malaysia yang memberi tumpuan kepada hak pengguna, kesihatan awam, perlindungan alam sekitar dan pembangunan mampan.

Tentang MPCMA: Persatuan Pembuat Cat & Salutan Malaysia (MPCMA) ialah persatuan industri utama yang mewakili pengeluar cat dan salutan di Malaysia, dengan menyokong piawaian industri, kerjasama teknikal dan penglibatan dalam hal ehwal peraturan.

Pegawai Media: Ivan Mahardika, LEEP, ivan@leadelimination.org | Izzuan Kayat, Agyl & Partners (Kuala Lumpur), izzuan.k@agylpartners.com, +60 17-371 3667