

## Wonder Makers Environmental

### **Recommendation for Dealing with the EPA's Limitations on Using LeadCheck Swabs for Paint on Plaster or Gypsum Board Surfaces**

It is very clear that the EPA does not recognize the LeadCheck swabs as being appropriate for lead sampling on drywall or plaster surfaces. This limitation is based on data from the manufacturer which indicates that there is a slight chance of too much loose gypsum dust interfering with the chemical reaction of the swab. Over the years that Wonder Makers Environmental has used the swabs for lead paint screening we have found the manufacturer's recommendation to remove dust from the score mark before sampling the paint to be an effective check against false negatives. Nevertheless, the EPA took to the extreme the manufacturer's notice that dust can bind with the chemical in LeadCheck swabs.

There is an alternative for dealing with this scenario since the Certified Renovator is checking the *paint* for lead, not the wall: Scrape the paint from the wall as if taking a paint chip sample to send to a lab (the laboratory prefers the samples free of drywall/plaster dust/residue so that the lead percentage is not artificially diluted by the weight of the underlying substrate). Once removed from the substrate the paint chip can be placed in a gloved hand, crushed, and the LeadCheck swab applied to the crushed paint chips. There is a double benefit to this method as it not only avoids gypsum interference but also helps the reagent to come in contact with all layers of the paint and ensures a color change if lead is present in one of the layers.