



PHOTO BY JERRY FOSTER

## Independence Day

Togo Independence Day was celebrated April 25 by the Togo Community in Oregon at Lu's event room in Tigard. From left, Raphael Toku, Koffi "Jean-Pierre" Dessou, Mutari Ali, Massan "Brigitte" Alinon-Dessou, Hilda Dzifa Asemsro-Amegandji, Dosseh Attiogbe, and Komi Claude Amegandji. Find out more about their activities at [www.togocore.org](http://www.togocore.org).

## Demolitions

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two substances are regulated by two different agencies.

The Oregon Health Authority is responsible for lead paint; asbestos is regulated by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

Asbestos is required to be abated — which means wetting, bagging and dumping it at a disposal site certified to receive asbestos waste.

DEQ requires all commercial, industrial and residential homes with more than four units to have a survey done to determine if there is asbestos present, said Audrey O'Brien, program manager at Oregon DEQ.

Single-dwelling homes do not require an asbestos survey, although DEQ recommends they be done. This leaves a loophole where people are required to abate asbestos if present, but they aren't required to actually check for it.

The lead paint rules followed by the Oregon Health Authority and the Construction Contractor Board stem from EPA rules. The enforcement of proper lead paint disposal is outlined in the EPA's Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) Rule. This policy covers the types of housing likely to have lead, contractor certification requirements and the creation of a lead-safe workplace.

According to the EPA, the RRP rule does not cover demolitions, only renovations. If one half of a building was being torn down, the lead-safe rules would apply. But if the entire building was demolished, the RRP rules would not.

OSHA requires the demolition crews that work around lead paint and asbestos be protected from harm, but those protections do not carry over to neighbors.

Ben Maynard, an environmental health specialist with OHA, said lead paint dust is still a health hazard even in a demolition.

"The exemption from the rule is a problem," Maynard said. "It's under-regulated and agencies are working on this issue."

Most recently, Oregon Senate Bill 705 was supposed to direct OHA to complete a study and report on the demolition of residential structures that may contain lead-based paint and asbestos. In a later version of the bill, OHA's responsibility and lead paint requirements were dropped.

The new legislation empowers the Environmental Quality Commission to require contractors to perform asbestos surveys on homes prior to demolition.

### Filing a complaint

As agencies, BDS, OHA, DEQ, OSHA, operate through a "complaint-driven process." They do not go out looking for construction violations, but rely on complaints to be filed before starting an investigation.

When calling in a complaint, it is helpful to have information such as the address and a description of the work being done. It is also useful to have pictures of the code violations and to call in the complaints as soon as one sees them.

Liefeld said it is important for people to call if they have questions or concerns. BDS also lists the kinds of code violations they enforce on their website.

"There's no harm in calling the city, its free, we enjoy calls, we're here to serve, we don't know what's going on until people who call us and let us know what's going on or what concerns they see out there," he said.

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