

ASBESTOS AWARENESS PROGRAM



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ASBESTOS AWARENESS PROGRAM

Asbestos is a serious health hazard commonly found in our environment today. It is important for employees who may work in buildings that contain asbestos to know where it is likely to be found and how to avoid exposure.

Background Information:

Asbestos is the name applied to six naturally occurring minerals that are mined from the earth. The different types of asbestos are:

- Amosite
- Chrysotile
- Tremolite
- Actinolite
- Anthophyllite
- Crocidolite

Of these six, three are used more commonly:

- Chrysotile (White) is the most common
- Amosite (Brown or Off-White)
- Crocidolite (Blue)

All types of asbestos tend to break into very tiny fibers. These individual fibers are so small they must be identified using a microscope. Asbestos fibers are also virtually indestructible. They are resistant to chemicals and heat, and are very stable in the environment. They do not evaporate into air or dissolve in water, and they are not broken down over time.

Usually asbestos is mixed with other materials to actually form the products. Depending on what the product is, the amount of asbestos in (ACM) asbestos containing materials may vary from 1% - 100%.

Where is Asbestos Found:

Asbestos may be found in many different products and many different places.
Examples:

- Sprayed-on fire proofing and insulation in buildings
- Insulation for pipes and boilers
- Wall and ceiling insulation
- Ceiling tiles
- Floor tiles
- Putties, caulks, and cements (such as in chemical carrying cement in pipes)
- Roofing shingles
- Siding shingles on old residential buildings
- Wall and ceiling texture in older buildings and homes
- Joint compound in older buildings and homes
- Brake linings and clutch pads

Signage Requirements:



Buildings that have asbestos containing materials (ACM) in them will have signage posted near the main entrances, frequently near the fire alarm panel.



Pipe and boiler insulation that contains asbestos will be

labels with identifying stickers and placards.

Asbestos containing ceiling tiles will not be labeled or marked. These tiles cannot be differentiated from other tile by visual means. They must be analyzed by a laboratory test.

When is Asbestos Dangerous:

Asbestos containing material is not generally considered to be harmful unless it is releasing dust or fibers into the air where they can be inhaled or ingested. Many of the fibers will become trapped in the mucous membranes of the nose and throat where they can be removed, but some may pass deep into the lungs, or, if swallowed, into the digestive tract. Once they are trapped in the body, the fibers can cause health problems.

Asbestos is most hazardous when it is friable. The term friable means that the asbestos is easily crumbled by hand, releasing fibers into the air. Sprayed on asbestos insulation is highly friable were asbestos floor tile is not.

Asbestos-containing ceiling tiles, floor tiles, undamaged laboratory cabinet tops, shingles, fire doors, siding shingles, etc. **will not release asbestos fibers** unless they are disturbed or damaged in some way.

Asbestos pipe and boiler insulation does not present a hazard unless the protective canvas covering is cut or damaged in such a way that the asbestos underneath is actually exposed to the air.

Damage and deterioration will increase the friability of asbestos-containing materials. Water damage, continual vibration, aging, and physical impact such as drilling, grinding, buffing, cutting, sawing, or striking can break the materials down making fiber release more likely.

Health Effects:

The most common way for asbestos fibers to enter the body is through breathing and/or ingesting.

Because it is so hard to destroy asbestos fibers, the body cannot break them down or remove them once they are lodged in lung or body tissues. They remain in place where they can cause disease.

There are three primary diseases associated with asbestos exposure:

- Asbestosis
- Lung Cancer
- Mesothelioma

Health Effects:

Asbestosis

Asbestosis is a serious, chronic, non-cancerous respiratory disease. Inhaled asbestos fibers aggravate lung tissues, which cause them to scar.

Symptoms of asbestosis include shortness of breath and a dry crackling sound in the lungs while inhaling. In its advanced stages, the disease may cause cardiac failure.

Lung Cancer

Lung cancer causes the largest number of deaths related to asbestos exposure. The incidence of lung cancer in people who are directly involved in the mining, milling, manufacturing and use of asbestos and its products is much higher than in the general population.

The most common symptoms of lung cancer are coughing and a change in breathing. Other symptoms include shortness of breath, persistent chest pains, hoarseness, and anemia.

Evidence suggests that cancers in the esophagus, larynx, oral cavity, stomach, colon and kidney may be caused by ingesting asbestos.

Mesothelioma

Mesothelioma is a rare form of cancer that most often occurs in the thin membrane lining of the lungs, chest, abdomen, and (rarely) heart. About 200 cases are diagnosed each year in the United States. Virtually all cases of mesothelioma are linked with asbestos exposure.

How to Avoid Exposure:

In order to avoid being exposed to asbestos, you must be aware of the locations it is likely to be found. **If you do not know whether something is asbestos or not, assume that it is** until it is verified otherwise. Remember that you cannot tell if floor or ceiling tiles contain asbestos just by looking at them.

If you have reason to suspect that something is asbestos, either because it is labeled as such, or because it something that is likely to contain asbestos (9" floor tile, for example).

DO NOT DISTURB IT

Employees will abide by warning signs and labels and will not disturb the asbestos containing material. Signs and labels shall identify the material which is present, its location, and appropriate work practices which, if followed, will ensure that asbestos

containing material (ACM) and/or presumed asbestos containing material (PACM) will not be disturbed.

How to Avoid Exposure:

Never;

- Drill
- Hammer
- Cur
- Saw
- Break
- Damage
- Move Distrub

Any asbestos containing materials or suspected materials.

For example, before moving any ceiling tiles to perform maintenance work, it will be necessary to ensure they do not contain asbestos. If they do contain asbestos, they will need to be removed by licensed asbestos abatement workers before the work may be performed. R.W. LaPine, Inc. will not perform any asbestos abatement.

Asbestos Spills:

Do not attempt to clean up spills yourself!

Disturb the material as little as possible. Also report any damaged pipe insulation, ceiling tile, 9" floor tile, fallen clumps of sprayed-on insulation, etc. to the Host Employer.

Take measures to prevent others from disturbing the spill until the Asbestos Abatement crew arrives.

Asbestos Work Practices:

- No R.W. LaPine, Inc. employee is permitted to work with or adjacent to exposed friable asbestos insulation. When working on multi-contractor worksites, R.W. LaPine, Inc. employees shall be protected from asbestos exposure.
- The use of chain falls, or the like, strapped around asbestos insulation, or unknown insulation, is not permitted.
- At no time is mechanical sawing or cutting of dry asbestos permitted.
- Screws shall not be used to hang signs on any asbestos containing or presumed asbestos containing insulation or material.

Employee Training:

R.W. LaPine, Inc. employees that may work around asbestos containing materials shall be trained in the following information on an annual basis. This training shall be documented.

- What is Asbestos
- Where is Asbestos Found
- Signage Requirements
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