

Asbestos Facts...

- Did you know that every week on average...
4 plumbers die
20 tradesmen die
6 electricians die
8 joiners die
... all from this hidden killer
- Asbestos is a naturally occurring fibrous material and Asbestos fibres are present in the environment in Great Britain so people are exposed to very low levels of fibres. However, a key factor in the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease is the total number of fibres breathed in
- Because asbestos is often mixed with another material, it's hard to know if you're working with it or not. But, if you work in a building built before the year 2000, it's likely that some parts of the building will contain asbestos.
- Asbestos is found in many products used in buildings, including ceiling tiles, pipe insulation, boilers and sprayed coatings.
- Asbestos related diseases won't affect immediately but later on in life, so there is a need for you to protect yourself now to prevent you contracting an asbestos-related disease in the future.

References...

HSE L143: Work with Materials containing Asbestos

HSE L127: Management of Asbestos in Non-Domestic Premises

HSE HSG264: Asbestos: The Survey Guide

Caution hidden killer



Asbestos... What you need to know

Asbestos was extensively used as a building material in the UK from the 1950s through to the mid-1980s. It was used for a variety of purposes and was ideal for fireproofing and insulation. Any building built before 2000 (houses, factories, offices, schools, hospitals etc) can contain asbestos. Asbestos materials in good condition are safe unless asbestos fibres become airborne, which happens when materials are damaged. Asbestos has been the main cause of occupational ill health from about 1950 onwards and is still the greatest single work-related cause of death from ill health. Past exposure is now responsible for about 4000 people dying from asbestos related cancers every year.

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WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is the name used for a range of natural minerals. There are three main types of asbestos:

- **Blue** (*crocidolite*)
- **Brown** (*amosite*)
- **White** (*chrysotile*)

The types of asbestos cannot be identified just by its colour. Asbestos has been used in a very large number of products, many of which have been used in buildings. Some products have one type of asbestos in them while others have mixtures of two or more. All types of asbestos can be dangerous.

WHY IS IT DANGEROUS?

Asbestos is made up of thin fibres. These can break down into much smaller and thinner fibres. The smallest fibres cannot be seen with the naked eye but they can be breathed in.

Asbestos fibres are only dangerous if they are made airborne and breathed in, but ALL types of asbestos fibres are potentially fatal if breathed in.

The fibres that are breathed in can become stuck in the lungs and damage them. This can cause scars that stop the lungs working properly (asbestosis), or it can cause cancer. The main types of cancer caused by asbestos are cancer of the lung and cancer of the lining of the lung (mesothelioma).

These diseases can take from 10 to 60 years to develop and there is no cure for any of them.

WHERE DO YOU FIND ASBESTOS?

You are most likely to find it in buildings built or refurbished before 2000. Many thousands of tonnes of asbestos products were used in buildings. Much of it is still there and you cannot easily identify these products from their appearance. Adjacent are examples of some common uses of asbestos which may help you identify its existence.

- **Sprayed;** 'limpet' fire insulation on structural beams and girders



- **Lagging;** e.g. on pipework, boilers, calorifiers, heat exchangers, insulating jackets for cold water tanks, around ducts



- **Asbestos insulation board (AIB);** e.g. ceiling tiles, partition walls, soffits, service duct covers, fire breaks, heater cupboards, door panels, lift shaft linings, fire surrounds



- **Asbestos cement (AC);** e.g. roof sheeting, wall



- **Cladding;** walls and ceilings, bath panels, boiler and incinerator flues, fire surrounds, gutters, rainwater pipes, water tanks



Take Note...

Important Things to remember:

- Asbestos is only dangerous when disturbed - avoid unnecessary disturbance.

There are 3 essential steps for Dutyholders to comply:

- Find out whether the premises contains asbestos and if so, where it is and what condition it is in. If in doubt, materials must be presumed to contain asbestos.
- Assess the risk, and
- Make a plan to manage that risk and act on it.

When am I at risk?

You are mostly at risk when:

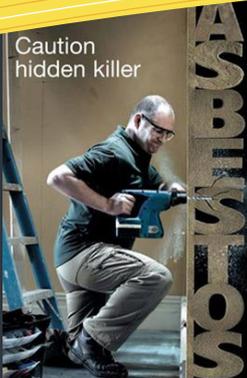
- You are working on an unfamiliar site.
- The building you are working on was built before the year 2000.
- Asbestos-containing materials were not identified before the job was started.
- Asbestos-containing materials were identified but this information was not passed on by the people in charge to the people doing the work.
- You don't know how to recognise and work safely with asbestos.
- You know how to work safely with asbestos but you choose to put yourself at risk by not following proper precautions, perhaps to save time or because no one else is following proper procedures.

Relevant Links...

HSE Asbestos web site
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm>

HSG 264 Asbestos : The survey Guide
<http://books.hse.gov.uk/hse/public/saleproduct.isf?catalogueCode=9780717663859>

Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/regulations.htm>



What the law requires...

There are a number of sets of regulations, which cover work with all types of asbestos-containing material; they place duties on 'dutyholders', employers and the self employed.

The duty to manage is directed at those who manage non-domestic premises: the people with responsibility for protecting others who work in such premises, or use them in other ways, from the risks to ill health that exposure to asbestos causes. Outlined below are the key pieces of legislation which affect our work activities.

WHAT THE REGULATIONS SAY

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 together with an Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) and additional guidance applies to all work with asbestos, in particular to work on, or which disturbs or is liable to disturb, materials containing asbestos, asbestos sampling and laboratory analysis.

MANAGING ASBESTOS IN BUILDINGS (REGULATION 4)

Whoever has control of a building has a duty to manage the asbestos in their building – your employer should be able to tell you who this is. The dutyholder has to take reasonable steps to find out if there are materials containing asbestos in the premises and, if so, how much where they are and what condition they are in. This can – but does not have to – involve a survey. A survey can be:

Management Surveys – *Management Surveys should cover routine and simple maintenance work. However it has to be recognised that where 'more extensive' maintenance or repair work is involved, there may not be sufficient information in the management survey and a localised refurbishment survey will be needed. A refurbishment survey will be required for all work which disturbs the fabric of the building in areas where the management survey has not been intrusive. The decision on the need for a refurbishment survey should be made by the dutyholder (probably with help from others).*

Refurbishment/Demolition Surveys – *A refurbishment and demolition survey is needed before any refurbishment or demolition work is carried out. This type of survey is used to locate and describe, as far as reasonably practicable, all ACMs in the area where the refurbishment work will take place or in the whole building if demolition is planned. The survey will be fully intrusive and involve destructive inspection, as necessary, to gain access to all areas, including those that may be difficult to reach. A refurbishment and demolition survey may also be required in other circumstances, e.g. when more intrusive maintenance and repair work will be carried out or for plant removal or dismantling.*

INFORMATION, INSTRUCTION & TRAINING (REGULATION 10)

Every employer must give adequate training (which includes information and instruction) to employees who are, or may be, exposed to asbestos, their supervisors and those who do work to help the employer comply with these Regulations. This should make them aware of (among other things):

- *The properties of asbestos, its health effects and the interaction of asbestos and smoking*
- *The type of materials likely to contain asbestos*
- *What work could cause asbestos exposure and the importance of preventing exposure*
- *How work can be done safely and what equipment is needed*
- *Emergency procedures*
- *Hygiene facilities and decontamination*

The training must be given at regular intervals. It needs to be proportionate to the nature and degree of exposure and should contain the appropriate level of detail, be suitable to the job, and should use written materials, oral presentation and demonstration as necessary:

- *Has everyone who is, or may be, exposed to asbestos been given enough information, instruction and training to enable them to safeguard their health?*
- *Was the training suitable for the job?*
- *Are there arrangements to train new people?*
- *Are there arrangements for regular refresher training?*

CDM REGULATIONS 2007

CDM requires arrangements to be in place to deal with asbestos during construction work, including refurbishment and demolition. Where construction or building work is to be carried out, the CDM client must provide designers and contractors who are bidding for the work (or who they intend to engage) with project-specific information about the presence of asbestos, so that the risks associated with design and construction work, including demolition, can be addressed. It is not acceptable to make general reference to hazards that may exist. Therefore site-specific asbestos surveys should be carried out in advance of construction work to make sure that the information is available to those who need it.