



## Asbestos Policy

## 1. Summary

This document is intended to be a simple Policy and Guidance document for staff and also for issue to any intended contractors working for or on behalf of the company. The asbestos plan sets out exactly what employees and contractors can expect and also what is expected of them.

## 2. Asbestos and its dangers

There are three main types of asbestos still found in premises. These are commonly called blue asbestos (crocidolite), brown asbestos (amosite) and white asbestos (chrysotile) All are dangerous but the blue and brown are more so than the white. They cannot be identified just by their colour. Asbestos containing materials (ACM) were used in the construction of buildings from the early years of the 20th century until 1980.

Breathing in air containing asbestos fibres can lead to asbestos-related diseases, mainly cancers of the lung and chest lining. There is usually a long delay between first exposure to asbestos and the onset of disease of 15-60 years.

## 3. Legislation

There are several pieces of legislation covering the use of ACMs. The most recent is the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2006. See: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/regulations.htm> These regulations include the requirement on employers to 'manage' the asbestos in their buildings. In summary, such management involves:

Find out if ACM or suspected ACM are present - carry out a survey.

Assume that materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence that it does not.

Check the condition of the materials.

Identify - If the material is in poor condition or maintenance or refurbishment is to take place arrange for the material to be sampled and identified.

Record the location and condition of the ACM and assumed ACM on a plan or drawing.

Assess whether the condition or location means the material is likely to be disturbed.

Monitor the condition of ACM and assumed ACM to check on possible deterioration.

Plan: prepare and implement a plan to manage these risks

## 4. Management of asbestos

4.1 The management of ACMs in the fabric of buildings is primarily the responsibility of the owners or Estates Departments who have responsibilities for the buildings. They must take all appropriate steps to comply with asbestos related legislation, approved codes of practice and standards. In particular it seeks to ensure that any work involving ACM will not lead to any person being exposed to greater than legally stated 'control' levels of asbestos fibres in air.

4.2 When installing appliances or completing services, a site survey will be completed and within will document any likelihood of asbestos must be logged along with location, type and risk factors.

4.3 All staff have a duty to report any damage to asbestos materials or to materials suspected of containing asbestos these must be listed within the survey.

4.4 The building's owners must complete an asbestos register of 'what is where'. ACM considered to be in poor condition has been removed by licensed contractors. A copy of this register must be seen and a copy attached to the site survey form.

4.5 Remaining ACMs, not considered to be a risk, must be labelled where practical, sealed/encapsulated where practical, monitored at reasonable intervals and removed when convenient or when noted to be deteriorating unacceptably. This company will not allow any employees to work in any area of a building not covered by the asbestos register or not listed but found to have asbestos which may not be in a safe manner.

4.6 Where asbestos is found, it will be reported to the building owner, they will be required as part of our contractual rights with us, to have the asbestos inspected to ensure it is safe, this must be completed by a fully registered professional surveyor.

4.7 We will require a written confirmation from the surveyor to ensure the area is safe for our employees to work. Work cannot be started until this confirmation has been received.

4.8 If maintenance or refurbishment works are to take place where ACM is known to be present, this is either removed before work commences if necessary or the presence of the ACM is brought to the attention of the contractor or maintenance staff so as to prevent inadvertent contact and potential damage.

4.9 In accordance with the regulations prohibiting the supply, import and use of asbestos and asbestos based products, the company does not purchase any such products or materials

## 5. Guidance for maintenance staff

5.1 If any material or dust is uncovered and it is suspected to be ACM, staff are to assume it is asbestos until determined otherwise - Stop work and get advice.

5.2 The HSE has issued safe working practice guidance for working on small amounts of asbestos containing material. However, these only apply after a suitable and sufficient risk assessment by a competent person which determines that 'control limits' (see below) will not be exceeded. The relevant HSE guidance can be seen at:  
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg289.pdf> and <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg188.pdf>

## 6. Procedure for uncontrolled fibre release

Where an incident arises that may have resulted in an uncontrolled release of asbestos into the work place at a concentration that might have exceeded the appropriate control limit, e.g. removing pipe lagging subsequently revealed to be asbestos, the following procedures will be implemented:

- i. The area should be immediately evacuated and steps taken to secure the affected area from re-entry of unauthorised persons.
- ii. The person in charge of the building(s) and must be notified as soon as possible in order that the cause can be firmly established. A Director of the business employing the employee must be informed by telephone without delay.
- iii. Specialist contractors will be needed to undertake air sampling and microscopic examination to determine fibre in air levels and the type of asbestos fibres - if any.
- iv Specialist contractors will need to be employed to thoroughly clean all visible debris and dust.
- v. On completion, employees will be required to seek medical attention and this will be logged and a RIDDOR form completed to report the exposure to the HSE.
- vi. As the employer, we are obliged to keep health records for the affected persons. Such records must be kept for at least 40 years. A record of any exposure to asbestos above legal action limits will be placed on any affected employee's personnel file. A copy of the record will be sent to the employee instructing him that it should be retained indefinitely.

## 7. Some key points from the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations (CAWR)

Note: It is envisaged that only licenced contractors will carry out any work on asbestos.

i. Other than for short term work on a small amount of asbestos or in some circumstances for limited work in an employer's own workplace by the employers' own workforce, a licence from the HSE is required to work with asbestos.

ii. The HSE or LA must be notified before commencing work (usually 14 days) that requires a licence.

iii. CAWR require that exposure to asbestos be prevented or reduced to the lowest level reasonably practicable, and are designed to protect anyone at risk from work with asbestos. The Regulations set 'control limits'

iv. To decide whether or not a 'control limit' will be exceeded it is first necessary to know what airborne fibre exposures are likely to be encountered. There are approved methods of estimating probable exposure levels.

v. Worker exposure must be below the airborne exposure limit (Control Limit). The Asbestos Regulations have a single Control Limit for all types of asbestos of 0.1 fibres per cm<sup>3</sup>. A Control Limit is a maximum concentration of asbestos fibres in the air (averaged over any continuous 4 hour period) that must not be exceeded.

In addition, short term exposures must be strictly controlled and worker exposure should not exceed 0.6 fibres per cm<sup>3</sup> of air averaged over any continuous 10 minute period using respiratory protective equipment if exposure cannot be reduced sufficiently using other means.

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