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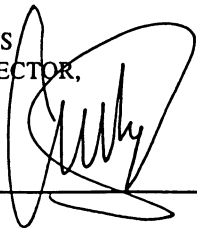
Asbestos in Existing Buildings

Background:

- Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral silicate usually separated into flexible fibres. Common asbestos classifications are chrysotile, amosite and crocidolite.
- Major properties include incombustibility, heat-resistance, strength and flexibility.
- Wide variety of building material used in sound, thermal, condensation control and fire-resistive products.
- Many products which contained asbestos in the past are either no longer in use or have been replaced. Examples are sprayed insulation, stucco, joint cements, flooring materials and pipe lagging.
- In the past, uses for asbestos ranged from products in which fibres are well bound (asbestos-cement pipe, floor tiles, stucco, etc.) to products in which fibres can easily become airborne (sprayed insulation, insulating cements, pipe/boiler lagging, etc.).
- Both loosely and well bound asbestos fibres can be disturbed and made airborne during building maintenance, demolition, renovation, and addition work.
- Without taking appropriate precautions airborne asbestos fibres can be inhaled by workers and building occupants resulting in adverse health conditions.
- Asbestos fibres can become embedded in the lungs which can lead to asbestosis and/or cancer. Once established, asbestosis is an irreversible

ISSUE OF THIS BULLETIN IS
AUTHORIZED BY THE DIRECTOR,
BUILDING STANDARDS.

C.M.TYE



LABOUR



and non-treatable condition with a progression through coughing, weight loss, breathing difficulties leading to death.

Acts and Regulations:

Alberta Labour is the Provincial government department responsible for administering the following Acts and Regulations:

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Chemical Hazards Regulation deals with asbestos removal and exposure guidelines.

General Safety Regulation deals with respiratory protective equipment, respirator use, storage, cleaning, inspecting, servicing and code of practice.

Safety Codes Act

Alberta Building Code deals with building construction in new and existing buildings.

Building Renovations, Additions and Demolitions:

Building permits are required prior to any work being done. This includes demolition, addition, renovation and construction. If there is asbestos containing material in the area considered for renovation it must be dealt with prior to any other work being performed.

In buildings or parts of buildings being demolished, materials having potential for releasing asbestos fibres must be removed prior to demolition.

The owner and the contractor are responsible to ensure that the necessary permits are obtained and no work is performed until the asbestos containing material has been dealt with.

Also the requirements of Alberta Labour, Workplace Health and Safety must be followed, to reduce the risk of asbestos exposure to building occupants and the workers. This would apply in all cases where asbestos containing material is present, no matter how small the job is.

Existing Buildings Where No Renovations or Additions Are Planned:

The Alberta Building Code contains regulations for dealing with asbestos containing building materials and prohibits some uses and addresses existing buildings where there is a potential for asbestos fibre release.

Immediate action is required by the owner of the building in both of the following cases.

1. The use (existence) of materials containing crocidolite (type of asbestos) is not permitted in buildings.



2. Where exposed asbestos containing material is found to be in a return air plenum.

Existing Buildings With Routine Maintenance/Repairs:

During activities associated with routine/regular maintenance and repairs in an existing building (normally those built before 1980), asbestos containing building materials may be disturbed, even though they may have been enclosed or encapsulated in the past. It is important that the building owner identify where asbestos is located in a building and have policies and procedures in place that will prevent or contain the release of any asbestos fibres during maintenance and repairs. In most cases the owner needs to retain the services of an Asbestos Abatement Consultant to develop these policies and procedures. Alberta Labour, Workplace Health and Safety can provide further guidance in this area.

Contacts for Further Information:

The Safety Codes Officer (Building) in the Municipality where the building is located (if they issue building permits).

Or

Alberta Labour

Building Safety

Edmonton 403-427-6461

Calgary 403-297-5759

Workplace Health and Safety

Edmonton 403-427-8848

Calgary 403-297-2222

Fax-back service for information on which municipalities are Accredited is 403-422-8700.

You can call the toll free number 310-0000 (during weekday business hours) and ask for one on the above numbers.

An Asbestos Abatement Manual is available from Alberta Labour, Workplace Health and Safety and is the accepted minimum standard for asbestos abatement projects. If interested please contact Information Services at 403-422-5070 for further information.

