

Disposal of Asbestos Waste

ACCEPTABLE INDUSTRY PRACTICES

February 2012

In Alberta asbestos waste is not considered to be a hazardous waste provided it is managed in accordance with the Guidelines for the Disposal of Asbestos Wastes

Bagged and marked asbestos waste can be disposed at Class I or Class II landfills.

Class I landfills can accept all wastes, including hazardous wastes.

Class II landfills can accept all waste, excluding hazardous wastes.

Management of Asbestos Waste

In this document, *asbestos waste* refers to waste containing asbestos in a concentration greater than one per cent by weight. For safety and health reasons we further recommend that the procedures identified here be met whenever asbestos is present or suspected of being present in a friable material. A friable material easily crumbles under hand pressure and the more friable a material the more likely it is to release fibres into the air.

Asbestos is a group of naturally occurring minerals that was widely used to insulate buildings, piping and structures from the 1950's to mid 1970's due to its non-combustibility and flame-retardant properties. Asbestos was also used as a reinforcing or binding agent in plastic, piping, cement and other construction materials due to its strength and flexibility.

The classification and recommended management practices identified next are consistent with the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* and *Waste Control Regulation (WCR)*.

Legal Framework and Classification

The *Alberta User Guide for Waste Managers* identifies asbestos waste as non-hazardous provided that it is managed according to the *Guidelines for the Disposal of Asbestos Waste*.

The *WCR* further deems asbestos waste non-hazardous when generated from specific sources or in small quantities, specifically:

- Household hazardous waste in the possession of the householder or while unsegregated in a municipal waste management system

- Agricultural waste resulting from farming
- Small quantities of hazardous waste (other than highly hazardous wastes described in Table 4b of the Guide) that is produced in an amount less than 5 kilograms per month if solid, or 5 litres per month if liquid and the total quantity accumulated does not exceed 5 kilograms or 5 litres at any time.

Landfill Disposal

Asbestos waste that is bagged or encapsulated can be disposed in Class I or Class II landfills. The bagged or encapsulated asbestos waste must be buried and covered immediately upon arrival at the landfill. It is recommended that advanced arrangements be made with the landfill to ensure the asbestos waste can be immediately buried upon arrival.

Asbestos Waste Removal

If you find friable asbestos-containing materials in a residence, building, or structure do not disturb these materials. Asbestos handling should be restricted to qualified personnel.

During removal of friable asbestos appropriate procedures should be adhered to and personal protective equipment used to prevent the asbestos fibers from becoming airborne and inhaled. Friable asbestos waste should be captured as soon as it is removed, bagged or encapsulated prior to transportation.

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When removing, handling and transporting asbestos waste, occupational health and safety, transportation and environmental requirements must be respected. Asbestos material including waste when fixed in a natural or artificial binder material (i.e., asbestos waste in a non-friable form such as tiles, shingles or piping) is not subject to *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations* requirements. Comprehensive information on these requirements is available through the following documents and websites:

Copies of Alberta's Acts, Regulations and Codes of Practice are available from the Queen's Printer at <http://www.qp.gov.ab.ca>

Alberta User Guide for Waste Managers outlines the requirements for waste management, including hazardous waste and hazardous recyclables, in Alberta and is available at: <http://environment.alberta.ca/02806.html>

- *Alberta Asbestos Abatement Manual*, prepared by Alberta Human Services. This manual provides comprehensive information on all aspects of asbestos management stressing occupational health and safety issues. The 2009 version is available at <http://employment.alberta.ca/documents/Asbestos-Abatement-Manual.pdf>. For questions and additional information call the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 or <http://employment.alberta.ca/SFW/2988.html>
- *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations*, available online at <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/tdg/clear-tofc-211.htm>.
- *Guidelines for the Disposal of Asbestos Waste*, Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, available on-line <http://environment.gov.ab.ca/info/library/7247.pdf>

Additional Information

Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development does not handle specific proposals or plans regarding asbestos removal from a particular structure. An employer is required to file notice before commencing an asbestos project to the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Center prior to disturbing or removing the asbestos from the structure.

Information on companies that can perform asbestos testing can be obtained from Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre at <http://employment.alberta.ca/SFW/53.html>. In addition, a list of asbestos consultants and waste service companies specialized in handling asbestos is available from the local yellow pages directory or by contacting the Environmental Services Association of Alberta at 1 800 661 9278 or 780 439 6363 or by visiting their web site at www.esaa.org.

Information on the availability of federal assistance programs for asbestos abatement activities can be obtained by contacting Environment Canada, Prairie and Northern Region office, at 1-800-567-1570 or edf-fde.pnr@ec.gc.ca.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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What is asbestos?

Asbestos are a group of naturally occurring minerals that were widely used as insulation in buildings and structures between the 1950's and the mid 1970's due to their non-combustibility and flame-retardant properties. Asbestos was also used as a reinforcing or binding agent in plastics, ceiling and floor tiles, shingles, siding, pipes, cement and other construction materials increasing their strength and flexibility.

What is Zonolite?

Zonolite is a brand name of vermiculite-based insulation products that may contain up to one per cent asbestos and mostly used as attic insulation that may be present on houses built before 1990. Detailed information is available at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/prod/insulation-isolant-eng.php>. When in doubt, the suspected insulation must be managed as asbestos waste.

When is asbestos a problem?

Asbestos is a problem when disturbed in a friable form, becomes airborne, and is inhaled. If the asbestos material is in good condition, it should be left alone and periodically monitored for its condition. Non-friable asbestos such as tiles, shingles, siding, pipe, or cement is not regulated.

What is asbestos waste?

Asbestos waste is material containing asbestos in a concentration greater than one per cent by weight that has to be disposed of. Of special concern is the management of friable asbestos waste. Friable is any material that easily crumbles under hand pressure and the more friable a material the more likely it is to release fibres into the air.

Is asbestos a hazardous waste?

Friable asbestos waste is not considered a hazardous waste in Alberta provided that it is managed according to the Guidelines for the Disposal of Asbestos Waste available on-line at <http://environment.gov.ab.ca/info/library/7247.pdf>.

When is asbestos waste a dangerous good?

Asbestos materials including asbestos waste is a dangerous good and subject to the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulation when not fixed in a natural or artificial binder material or when is part of a manufactured product.

Additional information on the transport of dangerous goods is available toll free at 1-800-272-9600.

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When should I remove asbestos containing materials?

Asbestos material from an industrial plant, structure or building that is being decommissioned, closed, maintained or renovated shall be removed when the asbestos material is exposed in a friable form and is not in good condition, or is likely to be released under uncontrolled conditions.

Where can I obtain the training needed to work with asbestos?

Alberta Human Services sets out the requirements for asbestos workers under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Asbestos workers must be competent as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Code before engaging in that activity. Detailed information can be found at <http://www.employment.alberta.ca/SFW/1345.html>.

Can home owners remove asbestos material from their own homes?

There are no Alberta laws that prohibit home owners from removing asbestos-containing material from their own residences. The removal of asbestos in a rigid form such as tiles, shingles or piping is quite common. The material should be properly contained taken to the local Class II landfill and buried immediately upon arrival. In any case, proper occupational health and safety procedures apply. When faced with friable asbestos, professional removal is recommended.

How can I protect myself when removing asbestos?

Occupational Health and Safety regulations require employers to provide asbestos workers with the proper information, training and personal protective equipment when engaged in asbestos abatement. Home owners engaged in home based asbestos removal activities should protect themselves in a similar manner.

Where does asbestos waste go after removal?

Asbestos waste must be properly contained as soon as it is removed and disposed of at the local Class I or Class II landfill. Asbestos waste should, in sequence and upon arrival at the site, be immediately buried and covered with appropriate material or waste. Asbestos waste should not be further disturbed once buried and covered to prevent it from becoming airborne. Landfill operator's permission should be obtained prior to sending asbestos waste to a particular site.

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Where can I find information on asbestos in the work site?

For specific information on work-related asbestos hazards, visit Alberta Human Services at <http://www.employment.alberta.ca/> and search for asbestos or contact Alberta Workplace Safety at 1-866-415-8690.

For more information visit:

- Canadian Home Mortgage and Housing Association http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/co/maho/yohoyohe/inaiqu/inaiqu_001.cfm
- Alberta Municipal Affairs - Safety Services Branch
Telephone: 1-866-421-6929
- Environment Canada:
<http://www.ec.gc.ca/toxiques-toxics/Default.asp?lang=En&n=98E80CC6-1&xml=A183A275-6D44-4979-8C4F-371E7BF29B9F>