

>> TOOLBOX TALK - Asbestos: Part 1

Asbestos Awareness:

Completing maintenance, renovations or demolition work in the construction sector can pose many different hazards, asbestos exposure being one of them.

Asbestos materials that are in good condition and undisturbed pose little risk to building occupants or workers. However, when materials containing asbestos fibres are disturbed - during removal, demolition and common maintenance activities, etc. - the small respirable fibres are released into the air and can be inhaled and/or swallowed. The small, hook like fibres can embed themselves deep in the lungs and in the digestive tract. Asbestos has been proven to cause lung disease as well as other forms of cancer in humans. Many of these conditions take years to fully develop and 10, 15, 20 years may pass before symptoms present themselves and an individual is diagnosed.

Asbestos was commonly used in construction from the late 1800's right up to the early 1980's. However, asbestos can also be found in buildings built after the early 1980's depending on when supplies were purchased/used and from where they were purchased (i.e., the country of origin). Asbestos can be hard to detect due to: changes in building ownership; poor documentation of materials used; and inconsistent use of asbestos in similar materials.

Common Uses of Asbestos - Residential and Industrial Sectors:

- Fireproofing

- o Amosite asbestos popular in industrial buildings.

- Insulation (vermiculite)

- o Commonly used in attic spaces.

- Drywall joint compound

- Plaster

- Textured ceiling coatings (stucco)

- Transite sheeting

- o Building exteriors (such as siding and shingles).
- o Commonly found in older fume hoods in laboratories.

- Acoustic ceiling tiles

- Pipe insulation

- o More commonly found in pipe elbows as opposed to straight run piping.

- Mechanical insulation

- o Found on boilers, HVAC units and Air Handling Units (AHU).

- Floor tiles and vinyl sheet flooring

- o More common in 9' x 9' floor tiles as opposed to 12' x 12' tiles.

- Tar mastic

- o Most commonly found underneath asbestos containing tile.

What to Do:

If, while working in an older home or building, you come into contact with a substance that looks fibrous and could potentially contain asbestos you should:

- Stop work immediately **and**
- **Either** contact an environmental company to complete asbestos sampling in the work area **or** contact a registered abatement contractor to abate the area through proper removal of the asbestos.

According to the Newfoundland and Labrador Asbestos Exposure Code Regulations and the Newfoundland and Labrador Asbestos Abatement Regulations, 1998, there are specific requirements that must be met when dealing with asbestos. **For more information see the toolbox talk "Asbestos: Part 2".**

Complete and attach Toolbox Talk Meeting Form and process as per company policy.



TOOLBOX MEETING FORM

Date: _____ Project: _____

Supervisor: _____ No. in Crew: _____ No. Attending: _____

Review Last Meeting:

	Names of Attendees (Signature Required)
Topics Discussed (policies, practices, procedures, hazard assessment):	
Suggestions Offered:	
Action(s) to be Taken:	
Injuries/Accidents Reviewed:	

Supervisor's Remarks: _____

Signature: _____