



# **MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS POLICY**

**POLICY OWNER:**

**Health Safety & Welfare**

**ISSUE DATE:**

**September 2010**

**REVIEW DATE:**

**October 2011**

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## 1. Introduction

**1.1.** The Council acknowledges the health hazards arising from exposure to asbestos and will protect those employees and other persons potentially exposed as far as is reasonably practicable. This will be achieved by minimising exposure through the management of asbestos-containing materials in the workplace premises. Everyone who needs to know about the asbestos will be effectively alerted to its presence. No one will be allowed to start work that could disturb asbestos unless the correct procedures are to be employed. This policy requires the full cooperation of management and staff at all levels.

**1.2.** The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 came into force on 13 November 2006 (Asbestos Regulations - SI 2006/2739). These regulations bring together the three previous sets of regulations covering the prohibition of asbestos, the control of asbestos at work and asbestos licensing.

**1.3.** The regulations prohibit the importation, supply and use of all forms of asbestos. They continue the ban introduced for blue and brown asbestos in 1985 and for white asbestos in 1999. They also continue to ban the second-hand use of asbestos; products such as asbestos cement sheets and asbestos boards and tiles; including panels which have been covered with paint or textured plaster containing asbestos. If existing asbestos containing materials are in good condition, they may be left in place; their condition monitored and managed to ensure they are not disturbed.

## 2. Scope

**2.1.** The aim of the Policy is to ensure that no persons are subjected to an environment which may subsequently affect their health. It has also been compiled in order that the Council, its employees and contractors comply with the duties and responsibilities imposed under the:

Health & Safety at Work Etc. Act, 1974 (HASAWA)  
Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations (MHSWR)  
The Control of Asbestos Regulations (CAR)  
Construction (Design & Management) Regulations (CDM)

**2.2.** This policy requires the full co-operation of management and staff at all levels and failure to observe any part of this Policy will be treated as misconduct, which could, depending on the circumstances, be deemed gross misconduct.

### **3. Asbestos types**

**3.1.** The three types of asbestos most commonly used are:

Amosite (Brown),  
Crocidolite (Blue)  
Chrysotile (White).

**3.2.** Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral, which has been incorporated into materials used for fire protection, thermal and sound insulation. Hazards associated with asbestos containing materials (ACMs) are from the inhalation of airborne fibres. Any ACMs already in situ that are in good condition and are sealed do not present a risk to health and therefore can remain, so long as their condition is monitored regularly.

### **4. Associated medical conditions**

**4.1.** The inhalation of asbestos fibres may cause asbestosis, lung cancer and mesothelioma.

- Asbestosis is a lung condition (a fibrosis of the lungs) caused by extended exposure to airborne asbestos fibres.
- Lung cancer research has indicated the risk of developing this disease is directly linked to the level of exposure. People who smoke and are exposed to asbestos fibres are at a far greater risk of contracting lung cancer than people who have the same exposure to asbestos alone.
- Mesothelioma is a malignant tumour of the pleura (coating of the lung), which is untreatable and primarily linked with exposure to asbestos fibres. There is no clear link between the risk of developing mesothelioma and the level of airborne fibre.

**4.2.** It has been estimated that asbestos has been responsible for over 30,000 work-related deaths since asbestos started to be widely used in the UK. Medical evidence has shown that the three diseases are associated with long-term exposure to airborne asbestos fibres. All are associated with the respiratory system and have relatively long latency periods.

### **5. Arrangements for managing asbestos**

**5.1.** Asbestos-containing materials will be managed to ensure the prevention of the presence of asbestos fibres in the air that can be inhaled by employees and others who may be present. All work involving ACMs must be carried out in strict conformity with this policy and statutory obligations.

**5.2.** The Asbestos Regulations include the 'duty to manage asbestos' in non-domestic premises. Guidance on the duty to manage asbestos can be found in the Approved Code of Practice The Management of Asbestos in Non-Domestic Premises, L127, ISBN 9780 7176 6209 8

**5.3.** Management of asbestos in the workplace involves:

- Surveying the premises to determine whether ACMs are present.
- Presuming materials contain asbestos, unless there is strong evidence to the contrary.
- Assessing the amount and condition of the ACM.
- Making and keep up to date a record of the location and condition of the ACMs in the premises.
- Assessing the risk from the ACMs.
- Preparing a written plan that sets out the location of the ACM and how the risk from this material will be managed.
- Taking steps to put the plan into action.
- Reviewing and monitoring the plan and the arrangements.
- Providing information on the location and condition of the material to anyone who is liable to disturb it.

**5.4.** Managing asbestos means everyone who needs to know about the asbestos must be effectively alerted to its presence. No one, who might come into contact or work on or near asbestos particularly damaged or deteriorated asbestos, should be allowed to start work that could disturb asbestos without being given the relevant information. The condition of the asbestos-containing materials should be monitored and the asbestos containing-materials should be properly maintained.

**5.5.** Those who are responsible for the 'day to day' site management of a Council premise (e.g. Manager, Premises Liaison Officer, Head Teacher, etc.) will need to:

- Ensure compliance with this policy.
- Accommodate any inspection or surveying work.
- Accommodate any remedial work identified from the surveying program.
- Develop and implement an asbestos management plan for the premises.
- Monitor the condition of known or presumed ACMs in their building.
- Ensure that the necessary checks are undertaken to avoid the disturbance of any ACMs known or presumed

**5.6.** In particular, ensure that no modifications/alterations or additions are undertaken which could disturb any presumed or identified ACMs in their establishment without the appropriate checks being undertaken. These checks will need to be carried out and results known prior to the works commencing. Where work is undertaken via Property Services, they will be responsible for ensuring this requirement is adhered to.

**5.7.** All ACMs will be risk assessed and managed so that their condition does not deteriorate and pose a risk to health. Any contractors working near ACMs must be notified of its presence before their work commences.

## **6. Asbestos management plan**

**6.1.** A Type 2 asbestos survey has been completed for all establishments where the Council is responsible for the building. This will not apply to lease agreements where the tenant is the duty holder. However, the Council will still be responsible for the communal areas of these buildings.

**6.2.** Site Management (e.g. Premises Liaison Officers, Head Teacher, etc) are responsible for implementing an asbestos management plan for their premises. This will include assessing the risk of the likelihood of anyone being exposed to fibres from ACMs (including presumed ACMs) in their premise.

**6.3.** The plan must set out the location of the ACM and how the risk from this material will be managed. The plan and the arrangements should be reviewed at six monthly intervals, or when there has been a significant change to the organisation or personnel.

**6.4.** Anyone working on, or removing ACMs will be controlled to ensure that adequate precautions are taken to prevent the release of asbestos fibres. Where work on asbestos insulation, asbestos coating or asbestos insulating board is to be carried out a contractor licensed under the Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations will be employed, unless the work is exempted from the Regulations.

## **7. Selection and control of contractors**

**7.1.** When contractors are engaged to work in the premises adequate steps will be taken to ensure the contractors are competent and have sufficient skills and knowledge to do the job safely and without risks to health. Only licensed contractors are to be used for the removal of asbestos insulation, asbestos, asbestos coating or asbestos insulating board unless it involves work of short duration.

**7.2.** When any contractor who may do work on the premises, arrives on the site they must report to a nominated person or a contact. Where appropriate a permit to work system should be considered.

## **8. Control of minor work on asbestos-containing materials**

**8.1.** Maintenance workers and other employees can carry out minor work of limited duration with asbestos-containing materials, or work with asbestos cement, and asbestos-containing articles made of rubber, plastic, resin or bitumen, or work with asbestos insulation, asbestos coating and asbestos insulating board. Before work is carried out, an assessment of the potential exposure to asbestos will be carried out and a written plan of the work to be carried out prepared. Employees will be provided with information, instruction and training they will follow the written plan and use the appropriate control measures.

## **9. Control of access to asbestos-containing materials (ACMs)**

**9.1.** Access to ACMs in the premises will be controlled so as to prevent inadvertent disturbance of the material and the release of asbestos fibres. The asbestos management plan and register showing the location of all ACMs and presumed ACMs will be made available to those who need to be aware prior to undertaking work on the premises.

**9.2.** Systems will be put in place to ensure that anyone liable to disturb ACMs is made aware of its location and can avoid disturbing it. This will include informing contractors and/or staff of the location of known and presumed ACMs before any work commences.

**9.3.** If no information exists in relation to whether or not ACMs are present in the fabrication or fittings to be worked on, the work **MUST NOT** start until the appropriate investigations have taken place.

## **10. Asbestos related incidents**

**10.1.** Since the prohibition of the supply and use of asbestos and asbestos-containing products by the Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the most likely cause of exposure is the disturbance of asbestos in the fabric of buildings. Unless the asbestos-containing material is in poor condition and/or is disturbed and produces air-borne fibres, people will not be exposed to asbestos.

**10.2.** Procedures to deal with asbestos-related incidents will need to be in place on site. These arrangements should be identified in the plan and those on site informed of what to do and who to contact for expert advice.

**10.3.** If the material has been damaged to warrant concern (e.g. a wall panel has been smashed and debris is evident on the floor as opposed to a small scratch on the surface of the panel) you must seek expert advice, and restrict access to the area until expert opinion has been obtained.

**10.4.** In the event of any ACMs becoming damaged, or if there is a suspicion that there is contamination then the decision to vacate the area immediately will be taken by the Senior Manager/Premise Liaison Officer based on a risk assessment of the prevailing circumstances.

**10.5.** Any damaged ACMs will be sealed or removed. If any ACMs need to be disturbed for maintenance or refurbishment purposes, they will be removed prior to the maintenance / refurbishment work being undertaken.

**10.6.** In the event of a Council employee, service user or member of the public being accidentally exposed to asbestos fibres, details of the incident must be recorded and held on file. In the case of an employee this will be kept on their personnel file and medical records for a period of 40 years.

## **11. Employees**

**11.1.** Staff will be made aware of the asbestos type 2 survey within their work place, by the Premises Liaison Officer. All employees will need to ensure that they comply with this policy and any specific instruction from their manager/supervisor in relation to the management of asbestos.

**11.2.** Where a problem arises relating to the condition of ACMs on the premises or during work with an asbestos-containing material, the employee must inform a responsible person immediately, usually a supervisor or manager.

**11.3.** In the case of an accident or emergency employees must respond quickly to ensure effective action can be taken by their manager/supervisor to correctly handle the situation.

**11.4.** If an employee feels that they have been exposed to damaged ACMs, or that they have disturbed ACMs during their work activities, they **MUST** inform their supervisor / line manager immediately.

## **12. Training**

**12.1.** The regulations require mandatory training for anyone liable to be exposed to asbestos fibres at work (regulation 10). This includes maintenance workers and others who may come into contact with or who may disturb asbestos (e.g. cable installers) as well as those involved in asbestos removal work.

**12.2.** All Council employees that have the potential to be exposed to asbestos fibres due to their working practices e.g. maintenance personnel, must undergo the appropriate asbestos awareness training to help them avoid any accidental exposure when undertaking their work.

## **13. Working with asbestos**

**13.1.** Council premises have been surveyed to determine whether ACMs are present. It should be presumed that materials contain asbestos unless there is strong evidence to the contrary. The amount and condition of the ACM will be assessed and the measures identified to ensure that airborne asbestos fibres are not present or formed in the workplace.

**13.2.** Everyone who needs to know about the asbestos must be effectively alerted to its presence, and no one should be allowed to start work that could disturb asbestos without being given the relevant information.

**13.3.** When work with asbestos or work which may disturb asbestos is being carried out, the Asbestos Regulations require the prevention of exposure to asbestos fibres. Where this is not reasonably practicable, the exposure must be kept as low as reasonably practicable by measures other than the use of respiratory protective equipment. The spread of asbestos fibres must be prevented. The Regulations specify the work methods and controls that should be used to prevent exposure and spread.

**13.4.** 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.

**13.5.** Building and allied trade workers, if they unknowingly work on asbestos-containing materials, or work on asbestos without taking the correct precautions, are particularly at risk. The Council therefore has a duty to any building or allied trade workers, whether their own employees or contractors.

**13.6.** Respiratory protective equipment is an important part of the control regime but it must not be the sole measure used to reduce exposure and should only be used to supplement other measures. Work methods that control the release of fibres such as those detailed in the **Asbestos Essentials task sheets** for non-licensed work should be used. Respiratory protective equipment must be suitable, must fit properly and must ensure that worker exposure is reduced as low as is reasonably practicable.

## **14. Asbestos removal**

**14.1.** Most asbestos removal work must be undertaken by a licensed contractor but any decision on whether particular work is licensable will be based on the risk.

Work can only be exempt from licensing if:

- The exposure of employees to asbestos fibres is sporadic and of low intensity (but exposure cannot be considered to be sporadic and of low intensity if the concentration of asbestos in the air is liable to exceed 0.6 fibres per cm<sup>3</sup> measured over 10 minutes).
- It is clear from the risk assessment that the exposure of any employee to asbestos will not exceed the control limit; and the work involves:

- Short, non-continuous maintenance activities. Work can only be considered as short, non-continuous maintenance activities if any one person carries out work with these materials for less than one hour in a seven-day period. The total time spent by all workers on the work should not exceed a total of two hours.
- Removal of materials in which the asbestos fibres are firmly linked in a matrix. Such materials include: asbestos cement; textured decorative coatings and paints which contain asbestos; articles of bitumen, plastic, resin or rubber which contain asbestos where their thermal or acoustic properties are incidental to their main purpose (e.g. vinyl floor tiles, electric cables, roofing felt) and other insulation products which may be used at high temperatures but have no insulation purposes, for example gaskets, washers, ropes and seals.
- Encapsulation or sealing of asbestos-containing materials which are in good condition.
- Air monitoring and control, and the collection and analysis of samples to find out if a specific material contains asbestos.


Under the Asbestos Regulations, anyone carrying out work on asbestos insulation, asbestos coating or asbestos insulating board (AIB) needs a licence issued by HSE unless they meet one of the exemptions above.

Although a licence may not be required to carry out a particular job, there must be compliance with the rest of the requirements of the Asbestos Regulations.

**14.2.** If the work is licensable there are a number of additional duties to be considered and information should be obtained from Property Services and Health, Safety & Welfare for:

- Notify the enforcing authority responsible for the site (for example HSE).
- Designate the work area (regulation 18).
- Prepare specific asbestos emergency procedures.
- Pay for employees to undergo medical surveillance.

**14.3.** The Asbestos Regulations require any analysis of the concentration of asbestos in the air to be measured in accordance with the 1997 WHO recommended method.

**14.4.** A clearance certificate for re-occupation may only be issued by a body accredited to do so. At the moment, such accreditation can only be provided by the [United Kingdom Accreditation Service \(UKAS\)](#) .

## **15. Record keeping**

**15.1.** Premises liaison officers are responsible for maintaining records of the following.

Management of asbestos-containing materials:

- A plan showing the location of asbestos-containing materials within the premises.
- A plan outlining the measures to be taken to manage the risks from ACMs in the premises.
- Records of information obtained during the selection of licensed asbestos removal contractors.

Work with asbestos:

- Assessment of potential exposures from work operations involving asbestos.
- Work plans for work involving asbestos.
- Information, instruction and training given to employees.
- Maintenance of engineering checks, inspections and regular examinations by competent persons.
- Air monitoring results (where appropriate).
- Health records and surveillance of employees exposed to asbestos above the airborne exposure limit.
- Provision and maintenance of respiratory protective equipment.
- Any occurrences of other persons exposed to uncontrolled releases of asbestos above the airborne exposure limit
- Consignment notes under the Special Waste Regulations for waste asbestos sent for disposal.

## **16. Monitoring and maintenance**

**16.1.** The condition of all asbestos-containing materials or materials suspected of containing asbestos will be inspected at agreed intervals to ascertain that there has been no damage or deterioration. Where damage or deterioration is found the asbestos-containing material will be reassessed and repaired or removed as appropriate.

## **17. Procedures for dealing with health & safety issues**

**17.1.** Where an employee raises a problem related to health and safety regarding asbestos, the council will:

- Take all necessary steps to investigate the circumstances.
- Take corrective measures where appropriate.
- Advise the employee of actions taken.

**17.2.** Where a problem arises in the condition of an ACM in the premises or during work with an ACM, the employee must:

- Inform a responsible person immediately, usually a supervisor or manager.
- In the case of an accident or emergency, respond quickly to ensure effective treatment.

**17.3.** The respective manager/supervisor will:

- Take all necessary steps to investigate the circumstances in conjunction with Building Services and the Health, Safety and Welfare Section.
- Take corrective measures where appropriate, in line with the advice from Building Services and the Health, Safety and Welfare Section.
- Advise the employees of actions taken

**18. Safe system of work**

**18.1.** Asbestos is hazardous to the employee and others if asbestos fibres are inhaled. The formation of airborne asbestos fibres can be prevented if the asbestos-containing materials in the premises are maintained in good condition and not damaged.

This can be achieved if you:

- Do not carry out any work on the fabric of the premises without consulting the nominated person.
- Do not work upon asbestos-containing material without an assessment of the risk.
- Follow the written plan at work.
- Use the control measures identified as necessary to carry out the work without risk to health.
- Report any damage or deterioration of asbestos-containing materials or any incidents during work with asbestos.

**19. Summary**

**19.1.** Asbestos is hazardous if in the form of airborne fibres, but you will not be affected if you do not disturb asbestos-containing materials. You can prevent inadvertent exposure to asbestos if:

- You consult the nominated person before carrying out any work that might disturb asbestos-containing material in any part of the building.
- Follow the written plan and use the control measures when carrying out any work that will disturb asbestos.
- Report any damage or deterioration of any asbestos-containing material.