

Health and Safety Advice Sheet 7:

ASBESTOS

BACKGROUND

Asbestos is the biggest single cause of work-related death and ill-health in Great Britain, causing 3500 deaths a year from mesothelioma and asbestos-related lung cancer. This is expected to rise to 10,000 a year by the year 2020. Most at risk are small builders, carpenters and plumbers because they often disturb Asbestos Containing materials (ACMs) as part of their work activity.

THE LAW

- Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 (CAWR).
- Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983 (as amended).
- Asbestos (Prohibitions) Regulations 1992 (as amended).

Asbestos can be found in buildings built or refurbished between 1950 to 1985, and can be in many forms. The three main forms of asbestos are:

White (Chrysotile)

Brown (Amosite)

Blue (Crocidolite)

ACMs can be found in the following materials:

- Corrugated roofing panels – asbestos cement (30% asbestos)
- Asbestos insulation board (AIB)
- Exterior and Interior (Panel) Walls
- Boilers, Vessels, and Pipework – containing upto 85% asbestos
- Ceiling Tiles
- Flooring Tiles
- Fire Blankets
- Asbestos rope
- Toilet cistern

What is the new duty to manage asbestos?

If you have maintenance and repair responsibilities for your premises either through contract or tenancy agreement or because you own the premises. The duty will require you to manage the risk from asbestos by:

- Finding out if there is asbestos in the premises, its amount and what condition it is in;
- Presuming materials contain asbestos, unless you have strong evidence that they do not;
- Making and keeping up to date records of the location and condition of the ACMs or presumed ACMs in your premises;
- Assessing the risk from the material;
- Preparing a plan that sets out in detail how you are going to manage the risks from this material;
- Taking the steps needed to put your plan into action;
- Reviewing and monitoring your plan and the arrangements made to put it in place; and
- Providing information on the location and condition of the material to anyone who is liable to work on or disturb it.

Anyone who has information on the location of asbestos on your premises is required to make this available to you as the dutyholder. Those who are not dutyholders, but control access to the premises, would have to co-operate with you in managing the asbestos.

FURTHER GUIDANCE

- Managing asbestos – Your new legal duties (C4000) HSE
- A short guide to managing asbestos in premises (INDG223(rev3)) HSE
- Asbestos and you (INDG107) HSE
- Asbestos dust – The hidden killer: Essential advice for building maintenance, repair and refurbishment workers (INDG187) HSE
- Managing asbestos in workplace buildings (INDG223) HSE
- Asbestos removal contractors association ARCA: www.arca.org.uk
- Free HSE leaflets: www.hse.gov.uk

