



Contractor Information

Asbestos in Construction

Asbestos Surveys

Disturbing asbestos materials during construction is a serious hazard that all contractors may encounter. Before bidding or starting any construction work, you are required to obtain a written asbestos report from the building owner or owner's agent. The report must be based on a survey by an accredited AHERA building inspector unless the building owner assumes materials in the structure are asbestos or has other convincing documents showing asbestos is not present in the work area. A building owner may know asbestos has been removed during prior work or that a new building has been constructed using materials certified to be asbestos free.

If you discover suspect asbestos materials you must report them to the building owner within 24 hours. Asbestos materials may be found in enclosed structures or between other materials, where they are not accessible before work.

Applicable Rules

Chapter 296-62 WAC, Part I-1—General requirements for handling asbestos

Chapter 296-65 WAC—Asbestos certification and notification requirements

Chapter 296-155 WAC, Part S—Construction demolition, prior removal of asbestos

Asbestos is also regulated by the EPA and regional air pollution authorities in Washington

Fines

State law specifies a minimum \$250 per day fine for failure to obtain the asbestos report. This fine can be applied to both the contractor and building owner. Additional fines may be applied if workers are exposed to airborne asbestos.

Presumed Asbestos Materials

Under the DOSH asbestos standard, thermal system insulation (pipe lagging, boiler insulation, etc.), surfacing materials (spray-on acoustical plasters, troweled on plaster coatings, etc.) and flooring materials (vinyl tile, sheet goods, etc.) are all presumed to contain asbestos in buildings built before 1981. The building owner must report these materials as asbestos unless an accredited inspector has shown them to be asbestos free.

What To Do

- Get a written asbestos report from the building owner for each project.
- Provide the asbestos report to any sub-contractors.
- Look through the work area to check that asbestos has been identified and make sure the report is complete.
- Make sure your employees are aware of asbestos hazards in construction
- Make sure your employees know about any asbestos materials on the job site that they may contact or disturb.
- Report any suspect asbestos materials you discover to the building owner.
- If asbestos materials must be disturbed or removed make sure a Certified Asbestos Contractor handles the materials.
- Prepare for accidental disturbances of asbestos materials—minor spills might be cleaned up with wet rags. Only use HEPA filtered vacuums around asbestos materials.
- Coordinate with other contractors and employers surrounding your work area regarding asbestos issues.



Building Owner Information Asbestos in Construction

Asbestos Hazards

Asbestos was widely used in many building products because of its tensile strength and chemical and thermal resistance. However, asbestos is extremely hazardous to workers handling it and to others in the area when it gets into the air and is inhaled. Asbestos is a carcinogen that causes lung cancer and mesothelioma.

Because of this hazard, laws have been enacted to prevent asbestos exposures. One part of these laws is the requirement for building owners to inspect their buildings before construction, renovation and demolition activities.

Common Asbestos Materials

Special handling will be required for these building materials when asbestos is present.

- STEAM PIPES, BOILERS, and FURNACE DUCTS insulation (thermal system insulation)
- RESILIENT FLOOR TILES (vinyl asbestos, asphalt, and rubber), the backing on VINYL SHEET FLOORING, and ADHESIVES used for installing floor tile
- CEMENT SHEET, MILLBOARD, and PAPER used as insulation around furnaces and woodburning stoves
- DOOR GASKETS in furnaces, wood stoves, and coal stoves
- SOUNDPROOFING OR DECORATIVE MATERIAL sprayed on walls and ceilings
- PATCHING AND JOINT COMPOUNDS for walls and ceilings, and TEXTURED PAINTS. Sanding, scraping, or drilling these surfaces may release asbestos

ASBESTOS CEMENT ROOFING, SHINGLES, and SIDING

Asbestos Inspections

Certain building materials are presumed to contain asbestos until an inspection is conducted. These materials are surfacing materials (trowel or spray applied surface treatments), thermal system insulation (on pipes, tanks and boilers), and flooring materials. This applies to materials in buildings constructed before to 1981.

An accredited AHERA Building Inspector must conduct any assessment of presumed asbestos materials or any other suspected asbestos materials before they may be handled as non-asbestos materials. An assessment is not needed if a material is assumed to contain asbestos and handled as asbestos. Manufacturer or construction records may be used if the lack of asbestos content was documented when the material was installed. Previous surveys and abatement records may also be used, if they cover the current work area.

Inspections must cover any material you expect to be contacted or disturbed during work. Materials in other areas of the building or those that will remain inaccessible during work do not need to be assessed.

You must provide a written report of the inspection findings to any contractor working in your building. You must also give your employees and other employers working in the building access to the report and warn them of any materials that may be a hazard.

Homeowners

If you are conducting work in your own residence, which is not used for commercial purposes, then you are exempted from the general survey requirements. However, you must provide information to contractors and other workers you bring in to work on your house.