

Spring is around the corner March 2008

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DON'T TAKE RISKS WITH ASBESTOS

Many people are still needlessly being exposed to asbestos in the workplace.

Despite changes in requirements, many are still not heeding the warnings. The group of people who are most likely to be exposed to asbestos are: -

- Maintenance workers.
- IT and data installers.
- Telecoms.
- Builders.

The requirements are to be found within the "Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006".

You need to decide who is the responsible person. Be it the Landlord or yourself being under the control of a repair lease or facility function.

If the location was built after 2000 the risk is low from having the material in the facility. This must be established.

Decide what information you have available i.e. surveys or insurance inspections.

You may need some external competent advice to complete an assessment / survey.

Once identified you need to let people know what you have and where it is located—giving due regard to hidden areas—in risers, in cupboards, in plant rooms and above ceilings.

If you have damaged material you may have to do something—doing nothing is not the answer.

Put together an action plan on what you are to do. Consider the extent of the material, its condition, its location and how accessible it is.

You may need to repair it or replace it, if it is damaged. You may need a asbestos licensed contractor to assist—you may need to seek advice.

Keep records of what you are to do, what you have done or what is to be done.

Tell people who may come to your location where and what it is, tell them the conditions. Anyone who works on or with the material must be trained—ask for evidence of any training course.

The Health and Safety Executive Inspectors have documents for enforcement for dealing with asbestos.

They are advised that their inspectors should consider enforcement action to deal with immediate risks when they find the following: -

- No survey has been completed.
- No management system in place to implement results of presumptive survey.
- No management plan to deal with asbestos risks.
- Maintenance workers and other working in building being exposed or liable to be exposed to significant risks from asbestos during operations.
- People using the building being exposed or liable to be exposed to significant risks from ACM's in poor condition (walking past friable materials).
- Where no information and or training has been provided to those liable to disturb asbestos.

Types of Surveys.

Type 1—location and assessment (presumptive survey)

Type 2—Standard sampling, identification and assessment survey.

Type 3— Full access sampling and identification (pre-demolition / major refurbishment) survey.

Review where you are.

What do you know about the premises?
Desk top exercise, review works completed over the years if possible.

Do no work that could disturb asbestos until risk assessment is completed.

A system to check before work is started.

What to do if discovered after works started.

Training for your staff and others

Complete an initial inspection and act on the findings.

You do not need an expert, you must be able to recognise, treat it as asbestos until proven otherwise.

If the material is in a good condition, it is not a problem, recognise that damage will release fibres.

High risk areas, lock the door, take samples arrange to repair and seal or remove.

Develop a strategy for compliance.

If a survey is to be completed the requirements of the document "MSDS 100" should be adopted, the survey should be completed by a person holding the qualification P402 Proficiency Certificate – Buildings Surveys and Bulk Sampling for Asbestos – The British Occupational Hygiene Society.

Assess and prioritise risk for remedial action. Develop a long term plan. Monitor and review. Action plans, monitoring the condition and locations, recommended every six months, sampling the records for accuracy, checking signs, monitoring awareness of staff, reviewing lessons learnt from asbestos related safety incidents, Safe systems of working specifications and access to records for contractors and others who might disturb, emergency plans and contingencies.

The image below has been reproduced in black and white rather than the current red warning colour.



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