

Asbestos Essentials: Employee Factsheet

This Factsheet is for tradespersons and employees.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was used in the building industry until it was discovered that breathing in the asbestos fibres was extremely dangerous to health. Whilst the new use of asbestos is now banned there may be existing asbestos containing materials (ACMs) in buildings, which can remain safe provided they are kept in good condition and left undisturbed.

Information for employees

Areas where you may typically find asbestos include:

- Roofs and walls
- Ceilings
- Insulation and lagging
- Fire resistant boarding
- Textured decorative coatings (artex)
- Older ceiling and floor tiles
- Ventilation systems
- Water tanks.

If there is asbestos where you work:

- Ensure you know the location of the asbestos (your employer should advise you)
- Report any damage to your manager and evacuate the area immediately
- Follow all health and safety instructions
- Keep up to date with the Asbestos Register and Asbestos Management Plan produced by your employer.

Information for tradespersons

Key Responsibilities:

- Make sure you have attended an Asbestos Awareness training course (in accordance with Regulation 10 of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012)
- Request information regarding Asbestos Containing Materials from the client
- If information is not available, arrange for a suitable and sufficient inspection to be carried out to identify any Asbestos Containing Materials by an accredited asbestos surveyor
- For nearly all work with asbestos, you will need to be licensed by the Health and Safety Executive and the work will need to be notified to the HSE
- Ensure you are sufficiently trained and competent to carry out your work to avoid the risks from asbestos and have the right safety equipment and decontamination arrangements
- Carry out a Risk Assessment and have a detailed Plan of Work recognising the presence of any Asbestos Containing Materials and detailing how exposure will be avoided.
- Regulation 4 of The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 requires duty-holders "to manage the risks from asbestos in Non-Domestic buildings" and, therefore, your client must provide adequate information to you on where asbestos is likely to be present and how to avoid it.

Recommended process for managing asbestos:

- Have detailed Asbestos Management Policies and Procedures confirming that work on Asbestos Containing Materials will be avoided and how
- Ensure that all operatives have suitable Asbestos Awareness Training
- Familiarise operatives with Client's Asbestos Registers and Asbestos Management Plans
- Control work by sub-contractors to ensure that the risks from exposure to asbestos are avoided.

ALL ACMs SHOULD BE TREATED WITH CARE

DO NOT WORK ON ANY ASBESTOS CONTAINING MATERIALS UNLESS YOU HAVE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO DO SO AND YOU ARE TRAINED AND COMPETENT. FOR MOST ASBESTOS WORK, EITHER YOU (IF SELF EMPLOYED) OR YOUR EMPLOYER WILL NEED TO BE LICENSED BY THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE AND INSURED TO DO SO. IF YOU DISCOVER OR SUSPECT ASBESTOS WHILST UNDERTAKING OTHER WORK, STOP WORK IMMEDIATELY AND REPORT THE SITUATION.

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