WorkSafe™

Asbestos Hazards in Demolition, Renovation, and Salvage

From 1991 to 2000, 88 of 249 deaths in construction were from asbestos-related diseases.

Asbestos is a hazardous material. Demolition of houses containing asbestos products can release asbestos fibres, which are extremely fine and can stay in the air for hours.

Unprotected workers exposed to asbestos-contaminated air can breathe in the fibres. This may cause serious health problems — including *lung disease* and *cancer*.

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is a strong and fire-resistant mineral fibre. In the past, asbestos was used as insulation against heat or noise and for fire protection. It was also added to materials such as cement and plaster to give them more structural strength.

Where can I find asbestos in a house?

Until the late 1970s, more than 3,000 products containing asbestos were used in house construction. When demolishing older houses, there is a high probability of encountering asbestos-containing materials. Demolition of these houses may release asbestos fibres.

Asbestos-containing materials that were once commonly used in residential construction are shown on the back of this page.

What are my responsibilities as an employer or owner/builder?

Employers and owner/builders are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all workers working for the employer and of any other workers present at the workplace. They are also responsible for protecting the public.

The WCB has specific regulations that must be followed covering:

- Demolition (Part 20 Occupational Health and Safety Regulation)
- Asbestos (Part 6 Occupational Health and Safety Regulation)

What do I have to do before work begins on the demolition, renovation, or salvage of buildings or structures?

The employer or owner/builder must have a qualified* person inspect the site to identify any asbestos that may be handled, disturbed, or removed.

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* "Qualified" means being knowledgeable of the work, the hazards involved and the means to control the hazards by reason of education, training, experience or a combination thereof.

If asbestos-containing material (ACM) is found:

1. A qualified individual must decide what ACM must be removed before demolition, and the safe work procedures required. (Refer to WCB guideline: G6.8 Procedures for abatement of asbestos-containing material during house and building demolition/renovation.)

2. All ACM that is friable (meaning easily crumbled or powdered by hand pressure) must be removed and disposed of by trained and qualified workers before demolition, renovation, or salvage work is started.

3. A notice of project (NOP) for asbestos must be submitted to the Workers' Compensation Board at least 24 hours before asbestos removal, demolition, renovation, or salvage work is started.

Asbestos survey and removal companies can be found in the Yellow Pages under Asbestos Abatement & Removal, Health & Safety Consultants, or Environmental Consultants.

If asbestos-containing materials that were not identified during the inspection are found during work activities, **stop work immediately!** Have trained and qualified workers remove these materials before resuming work.

Additional information about asbestos and NOP forms are available on the Internet:

- **The WCB booklet *Safe Work Practices for Handling Asbestos*** http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/ health_and_safety_information/by_topic/assets/pdf/ asbestos.pdf (PDF 899kb)
- **WCB Health & Safety Centre for Construction** http:/construction.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/Home.asp
- **G6.8 Procedures for abatement of asbestos-containing material (ACM) during house and building demolition/ renovation** http://regulation.healthandsafetycentre.org/s/ GuidelinePart6.asp#SectionNumber:G6.8
- **Notice of Project Form for Asbestos or Lead** http://www.worksafebc.com/online_services/ notice_of_project/
  phone: 1 866 271-4879
  fax: 1 866 362-3130,
  Attention: WCB Customer Service
  e-mail: moore-wcb.customer.service@ca.moore.com

Possible Sources of Asbestos

Possible Sources of Asbestos (illustration labels):

- Roof felt and shingles
- Loose blown-in insulation such as vermiculite
- Batt insulation
- Soundproofing or decorative material sprayed on walls and ceilings
- Patching and joint compound for walls and ceilings
- Window putty
- Recessed lighting
- Range hood
- Outlets and switchboxes
- Acoustical tiles
- Textured coat
- Flooring
  - Vinyl, asphalt, or rubber floor tiles
  - Vinyl and linoleum sheet flooring
  - Flooring adhesive
- Dishwasher
- Insulation on knob and tube wiring
- Lamp sockets
- Artificial fireplace logs and ashes
- Deck undersheeting
- Main panel and fuse boxes
- Heat reflector for wood stove
- Water heater
- Asbestos cement (transite) board siding and undersheeting
- Duct insulation and tape
- Pipe insulation
- Boiler and furnace insulation
- Door and cover gaskets
- Clothes dryer

WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF BRITISH COLUMBIA