

Toolbox Talk - Asbestos

- Reason:** Up to 5,000 people a year, from all industries, die from asbestos-related diseases.
- Why:** Be aware of asbestos – it could kill you.
- Outline:** This talk will cover where you will find asbestos, how it can affect you and hazardous work.

Asbestosis is a serious, chronic, non-cancerous respiratory disease. If inhaled, the asbestos fibres aggravate lung tissues, which cause them to scar. Symptoms of asbestosis include shortness of breath and a dry crackling sound in the lungs while inhaling. In its advanced stages, the disease may cause cardiac failure.

There is no effective treatment for asbestosis; the disease is usually disabling or fatal. Mesothelioma is a rare form of cancer that most often occurs in the thin membrane lining of the lungs, chest, abdomen, and (rarely) heart. About 200 cases are diagnosed each year. Virtually all cases of mesothelioma are linked with asbestos exposure.

Where you will find asbestos

Insulation and sprayed coatings used for:

- Boilers, plant and pipework hidden in underfloor ducting
- Fire protection to steelwork, hidden behind false ceilings
- Thermal and acoustic insulation of buildings
- Some textured coatings and paints
- Friction materials such as brake linings and clutch plates
- Gaskets and packings in engines, heating and ventilation systems.

Insulating board used in the following places:

- Fire protection to doors, protected exits and steelwork
- Claddings on walls and ceilings
- Internal walls, partitions and suspended ceiling tiles.

Asbestos cement, which is found as:

- Corrugated roofing and cladding sheets of buildings
- Flat sheets for partitions, cladding and door facings
- Rainwater gutters and downpipes.

How asbestos can affect you

1. Asbestos breaks into tiny, long, sharp fibres. They can get lodged and scar the lungs, causing asbestosis or fibrosis.
2. Asbestos fibres may also cause lung cancer.
3. It can also cause mesothelioma, a cancer of the inner lining of the chest wall. This cancer is incurable.
4. Smokers are at much greater risk of asbestos-related diseases.

Hazardous work

1. Anyone working on building repair and refurbishment are considered most at risk.
2. Old buildings constructed in the 1950s and 60s may have many forms of asbestos-containing materials used in them.
3. The removal of roofing felts, old floor tiles, textured paints and plasters containing asbestos can be hazardous.
4. If you think you've come across asbestos, stop work and tell your supervisor or foreman.

Asbestos removal should only be attempted by qualified persons, trained and experienced in the appropriate safe working methods for asbestos, using appropriate specialist equipment.

• **Note to supervisor:** Now inform your workforce of the company policy regarding the discovery of suspected asbestos.

Do you have any questions for me?

Questions for you

Q: What would you do if you thought that you had discovered asbestos materials in your work area?

Q: What diseases can exposure to asbestos cause?

Q: What are some of the hazardous work areas?

Q: Where will you find insulation and sprayed coatings?

Q: Where will you find insulating boards?

Q: Where will you find asbestos cement?

REMEMBER IF YOU SUSPECT ASBESTOS, STOP WORK IMMEDIATELY AND TELL YOUR SUPERVISOR.

Further information

- *Construction Site Safety* (GE 700) – Module B8
- *Site Safety Simplified* (GE 706) – Chapter 15
- HSE – HSG210 (fourth edition Jan 2018) Asbestos essentials task manual
- HSE – INDG188 Asbestos alert
- HSE – INDG289 Working with asbestos in buildings
- HSE - Managing and working with asbestos: Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN TOOLBOX TALK ATTENDANCE SHEET

Asbestos

Date

Location

Start time

End time

Presenter's name

Presenter's signature

Employees Name	Employees Signature