



# HEALTH & SAFETY

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## ASBESTOS POLICY & PROCEDURES

APRIL 2012

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## **Image Gallery**

**Asbestos Emergency Action Procedures / Flowchart**

**Record Of Suspected Exposure To Airborne Asbestos**

## 1.0 Introduction

This document complements the existing Health and Safety Policy and Procedures allowing it to address the specific requirements of the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 (CAR). All previous documentation on the above subject will be superseded by this document. All staff involved in working with/surveying asbestos, supervising such work or issuing contracts for works to be undertaken on asbestos, should be familiar with the contents of this document.

It is the company's policy that prior to the commencement of any site works, where any building or other structure being worked on which could potentially contain asbestos, it is essential that the Asbestos Management Plan or Asbestos Register is first reviewed to establish if any asbestos containing materials are likely to be present within the working area.

## 2.0 What is Asbestos

Asbestos is a general name applied to a group of related, natural occurring fibrous minerals, which have been commonly used in approximately 3000 products. Sometimes the asbestos has been used because of its specific insulating, heat, water or electrical resisting properties, but in many cases, there is no clear cut reason for it being there, it may simply have been used as a filler material. Note it is not always possible to detect asbestos upon visual inspection.

## 3.0 Types of Asbestos

There are three **main** types of asbestos, which have been commonly used, they are:

- a) **Chrysotile** (White) – This is the most common of the three types, with a colour varying from white to pale green. It has poor acid resistance and is hydrophilic, therefore it is generally considered less harmful than the other two types
- b) **Amosite** (Brown) – Light grey to pale brown and tending to be more brittle than the other two. It has good acid resistance and poorer alkali resistance and is hydrophobic.
- c) **Crocidolite** (Blue) – This has a short needle like structure. It has similar properties to amosite, but with better tensile strength.

Other asbestos types include anthophyllite, actinolite and tremolite, it is however unlikely that these types of asbestos will be found in buildings.

Asbestos fibres are also classified as either 'Serpentine' (soft curly fibres such as Chrysotile) or 'Amphiboles' (fine needle like fibres with

barbed ends, such as Crocidolite). Amphiboles are considered more dangerous due to the physical structure making them more likely to embed themselves within the walls of the lungs.

#### **4.0 Health Risks**

It has been recognised that regular asbestos exposure leads to increased risk of lung cancer, including mesothelioma, which is the more specific cancer related to asbestos exposure. All types of asbestos pose a risk. Blue and brown are thought to pose a greater risk than white. The control limits for the latter has been reduced. The fibres of all types however will lodge in the lining of the lung where it can remain for many years leading to irritation and possible formation of tumours. A one off short term exposure is unlikely to pose a health concern, but each time a person is exposed, the risk increases. People with breathing problems and smokers will have a more increased risk of contracting asbestos related cancer than those who do not.

There are currently no real safe exposure levels for asbestos and certainly no cure once symptoms show. Therefore the only sensible strategy is to eliminate or minimise exposure.

Currently around 3000 deaths a year are attributed to asbestos related diseases, and this figure has been climbing steadily over the past ten years. It is however thought that this figure will continue to rise over the next twenty years with many of those number being tradesman who were exposed to fibres from asbestos containing materials in the 1970's and 80's. The CAR has therefore addressed the requirement of ensuring the safe management of asbestos containing materials and ensuring that any asbestos is:

- **Removed**
- **Encapsulated**
- **Managed**

This policy focuses on the company's obligations and duties with regards to the maintenance of our offices and work carried out by our staff on other properties, together with the environmental issues involved in the safe disposal of asbestos waste coming from those works. The general safety of others and our staff whilst carrying out such work is also addressed, as is that of others affected by our activities.

#### **5.0 Exposure Levels**

The Control of Asbestos Regulations outline permissible limits for exposure to the different types of asbestos fibres. This is a maximum concentration of asbestos fibres in the air (average over any continuous four hour or ten minute period).

The following table details the typical exposure to asbestos fibres, where poor control measure and work practices have been used (fibres per millilitre of air f/ml).

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>Dry Removal of Sprayed (Limpet) Coating</b> | Up to 1000 |
| <b>Dry removal of lagging</b>                  | Up to 100  |
| <b>Drilling AIB</b>                            | Up to 10   |
| <b>Jigsaw on AIB</b>                           | Up to 20   |
| <b>Hand saw on AIB</b>                         | Up to 10   |
| <b>Sweeping of AIB Debris</b>                  | Up to 100  |
| <b>Drilling AC</b>                             | Up to 1    |
| <b>Hand sawing AC</b>                          | Up to 1    |
| <b>Use of a circular saw on AC</b>             | Up to 20   |

**AIB Asbestos Insulation Board**

**AC Asbestos Cement**

## **6.0 Legislation**

Apart from the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, there are three specific sets of Regulations associated with activities dealing with asbestos:

The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012 came into force on 6 April 2012 (Asbestos Regulations - SI 2012/632)

These Regulations bring together the three previous sets of Regulations covering the prohibition of asbestos, the control of asbestos at work and asbestos licensing.

The Regulations prohibit the importation, supply and use of all forms of asbestos. They continue the ban introduced for blue and brown asbestos 1985 and for white asbestos in 1999. They also continue the ban the second-hand use of asbestos products such as asbestos cement sheets and asbestos boards and tiles; including panels which have been covered with paint or textured plaster containing asbestos.

The ban applies to new use of asbestos. If existing asbestos containing materials are in good condition, they may be left in place, their condition monitored and managed to ensure they are not disturbed.

The Asbestos Regulations also include the 'duty to manage asbestos' in non-domestic premises. Guidance on the duty to manage asbestos can be found in the 'Approved Code of Practice The Management of Asbestos in Non-Domestic Premises', L27.

The Regulations require mandatory training for anyone liable to be exposed to asbestos fibres at work (Regulation 10). This includes maintenance workers and others who may come into contact with or who may disturb asbestos (eg cable installers) as well as those involved in asbestos removal work.

When work with asbestos or which may disturb asbestos is being carried out, the Asbestos Regulations require employers and the self-employed to prevent exposure to asbestos fibres. Where this is not reasonably practicable, they must make sure that exposure is kept as low as reasonably practicable by measures other than the use of respiratory protective equipment. The spread of asbestos must be prevented. The Regulations specify the work methods and controls that should be used to prevent exposure and spread.

Worker exposure must be below the airborne exposure limit (Control Limit). The Asbestos Regulations have a single Control Limit for all types of asbestos of 0.1 fibres per cm<sup>3</sup>. A Control Limit is a maximum concentration of asbestos fibres in the air (averaged over any continuous 4 hour period) that must not be exceeded.

In addition, short term exposures must be strictly controlled and worker exposure should not exceed 0.6 fibres per cm<sup>3</sup> of air averaged over any continuous 10 minute period using respiratory protective equipment if exposure cannot be reduced sufficiently using other means.

Respiratory protective equipment is an important part of the control regime but it must not be the sole measure used to reduce exposure and should only be used to supplement other measures. Work methods that control the release of fibres such as those detailed in the Asbestos Essentials task sheets for non-licensed work should be used. Respiratory protective equipment must be suitable, must fit properly and must ensure that worker exposure is reduced as low as is reasonably practicable.

Most asbestos removal work must be undertaken by a licensed contractor but any decision on whether particular work is licensable is based on the risk. Work is only exempt from licensing if:

- the exposure of employees to asbestos fibres is sporadic and of low intensity (but exposure cannot be considered to be sporadic and of low intensity if the concentration of asbestos in the air is liable to exceed 0.6 fibres per cm<sup>3</sup> measured over 10 minutes); and
- it is clear from the risk assessment that the exposure of any employee to asbestos will not exceed the control limit; and
- the work involves:
  - short, non-continuous maintenance activities. Work can only be considered as short, non-continuous maintenance

activities if any one person carries out work with these materials for less than one hour in a seven-day period. The total time spent by all workers on the work should not exceed a total of two hours.

- removal of materials in which the asbestos fibres are firmly linked in a matrix, Such materials include: asbestos cement; textured decorative coatings and paints which contain asbestos; articles of bitumen, plastic, resin or rubber which contain asbestos where their thermal or acoustic properties are incidental to their main purpose (eg vinyl floor tiles, electric cables, roofing felt) and other insulation products which may be used at high temperatures but have no insulation purposes, for example gaskets, washers, ropes and seals.
- encapsulation or sealing of asbestos-containing materials which are in good condition, or
- air monitoring and control, and the collection and analysis of samples to find out if a specific material contains asbestos.

Under the Asbestos Regulations, anyone carrying out work on asbestos insulation, asbestos coating or asbestos insulating board (AIB) needs a licence issued by HSE unless they meet one of the exemptions above.

**Although you may not need a licence to carry out a particular job, you still need to comply with the rest of the requirements of the Asbestos Regulations.**

If the work is licensable you have a number of additional duties. You need to:

- Notify the enforcing authority responsible for the site where you are working (for example HSE or the local authority)
- Designate the work area (see regulation 18 for details)
- Prepare specific asbestos emergency procedures; and
- Pay for your employees to undergo medical surveillance

The Asbestos Regulations require any analysis of the concentration of asbestos in the air to be measured in accordance with the 1997 WHO recommended method.

From 6 April 2007, a clearance certificate for re-occupation may only be issued by a body accredited to do so, such as the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS).

## **7.0 Policy Application**

The Company recognises the need to protect its employees and others from the harmful effects of asbestos by:-

- a) complying with the above Regulations;
- b) providing standards not less than those set out in the Approved Codes of Practice and associated HSE Guidance;
- c) taking all reasonable steps to prevent its employees and others from breathing asbestos fibres and/or releasing asbestos fibres into the environment;
- d) providing appropriate training for those carrying out asbestos related work;
- e) ensuring all works are carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Control of Asbestos Regulations.
- f) ensuring all members of staff are provided with 'Asbestos Awareness' training.

It is recognised that it is a difficult issue to tackle and the Company's aim is to deal with the issue in a pragmatic fashion.

If any worker suspects that a material he is working on or is about to work on may contain asbestos, then he should stop work immediately and inform his supervisor so that further investigations may be carried out.

All work involving asbestos is covered by the Control of Asbestos Regulations and work involving asbestos should only be carried out by persons who have received the proper training and who have the necessary protective equipment and respirators. Under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012, all persons involved with building; construction; installation of services and pipework etc; maintenance; refurbishment; repair of existing structure where asbestos may be present, must be provided with compulsory Asbestos Awareness Training.

Prior to the commencement of any site works, where any building or other structure being worked on that could potentially contain asbestos, it is essential that the Asbestos Management Plan or Asbestos Register is first reviewed to establish if any asbestos containing materials are likely to be present within the working area. However even if no asbestos containing materials have been identified on the asbestos register/management plan, care must still be exercised as additional

hidden materials may not have been previously identified may be present.

### **7.1 Records of Location**

Copies of all asbestos registers and survey reports, be they for the company's own premises, or for those of our clients, will be held centrally at the company's head office.

### **7.2 Competence**

Information on the training and competence of the company's staff will be maintained at all times and made available to relevant parties upon request.

### **7.3 Assessment**

Before any work is undertaken where asbestos is present in any form, the Control of Asbestos Regulations requires that an assessment is carried out. The assessment for Asbestos Survey work should consist of the following:

- A familiarisation of the site via a walk through and a desktop study.
- Survey conducted as set out in project proposal.
- Taking of all necessary bulk samples to the prescribed density in accordance with HSG264.
- Taking steps to prevent or reduce exposure from any fibre release to workers and other users of the premises.
- Ensuring that the correct PPE is available and is used, this includes FFP3 half mask respirators and Class 5 disposable coveralls.

### **7.4 Safe Systems of Work**

All work will be carried out in accordance with the requirements of HSG264 and the CAR. Personal monitoring of staff will be undertaken on a periodic basis if deemed necessary.

Safe Systems of Work will be introduced and updated as necessary in the form of Method Statements and Risk Assessments where work results in a possible risk of exposure to asbestos fibres. All necessary PPE for the company's employees will be provided free of charge.

The disposal of asbestos waste will be carried in accordance with all current regulations. There is generally a requirement to provide three days notice before disposal. All asbestos waste will be disposed of via properly labelled asbestos waste sacks bearing the asbestos 'a' symbol and the UN classification number. Waste will be placed inside a red coloured waste bag which will be sealed and then placed inside a clear asbestos waste bag which will also be sealed. All waste will be disposed off at an approved licensed site by an appropriately licensed waste carrier.

## **7.5 Health Records**

A record of every employee who has worked with or been exposed, during the course of work, to asbestos fibres will be maintained by the Company. All employees who are regularly working with or sampling asbestos will need to have annual lung function tests and consultation with the occupational health service. Such records are required to be kept for a minimum period of forty (40) years.

## **7.6 Information and Training**

All workers likely to come into contact with asbestos must be made aware of this Policy, any relevant Safe Working Method. Appropriate levels of training will be given to all personnel who are responsible for the maintenance of buildings, those who are involved in any asbestos related work and those who may come into contact with asbestos containing materials. Training provided will be recorded on their personal training records.

## **8.0 Implementation of the Policy**

The policy will be continuously monitored and regularly reviewed to ensure that it is effective in the management of asbestos. Progress of the implementation of the policy will be reported to the Directors of the Company.

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/index.htm>

## Asbestos image gallery



Asbestos fire blanket



Suspended AIB ceiling tiles in a corridor



Pieces of AIB



Asbestos containing vinyl floor tiles



Perforated AIB ceiling tiles damaged around the light fitting



Asbestos cement downpipe, hopper and profile sheet



Damaged asbestos panelling



Torn asbestos pipe lagging



Asbestos cement roof (weathered exterior)



Wall with trowelled loose asbestos



Damaged asbestos cement roof



Damaged asbestos lagging on hot water pipes



Damaged asbestos pipe lagging and debris



Careful handling of an AIB ceiling tile during removal



Pipe insulated using both asbestos lagging and rope



Unscrewing of an AIB ceiling tile



Asbestos rope used as insulation on a pipe



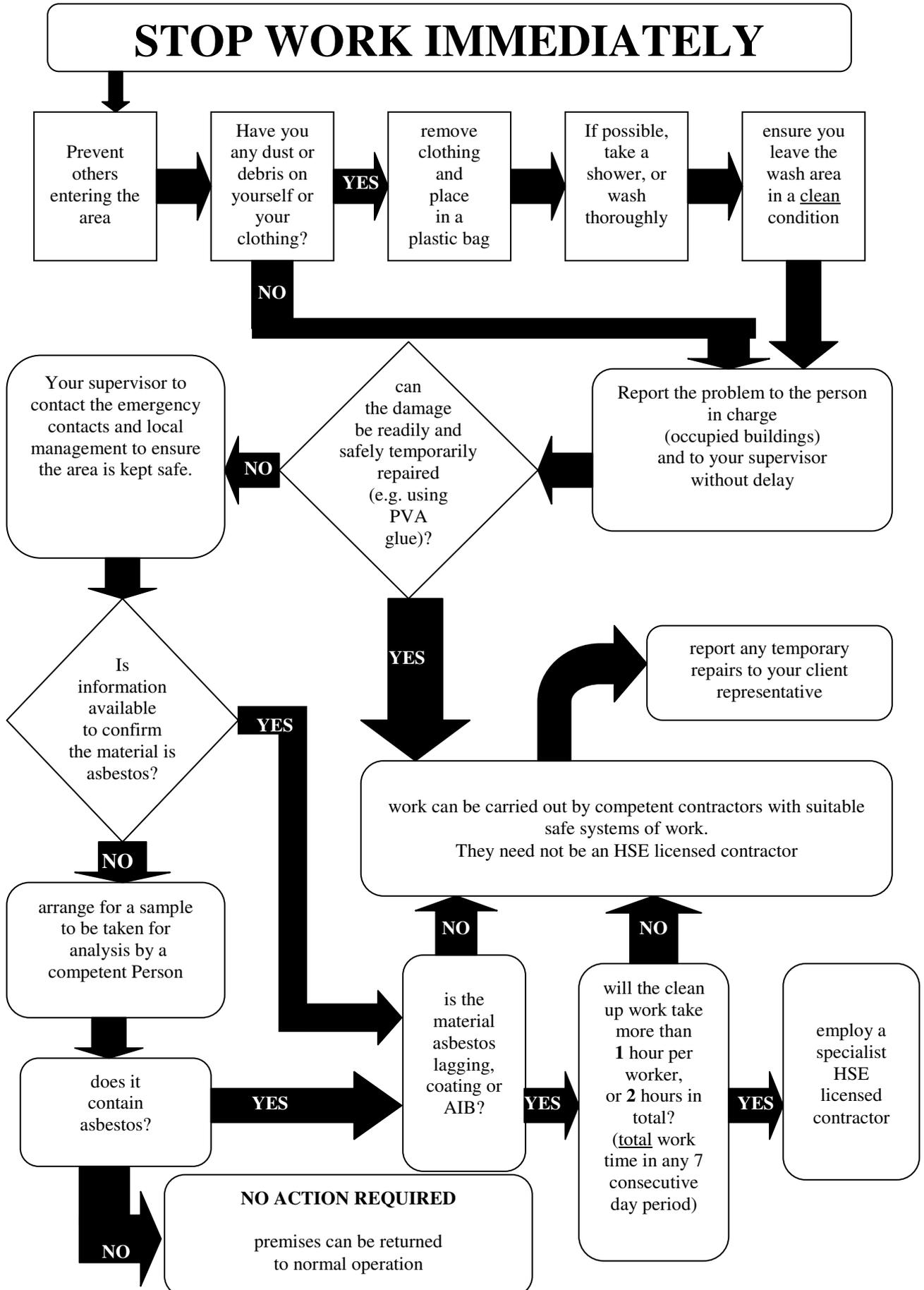
Sprayed 'limpet' asbestos coating which has been partly removed



Sprayed 'limpet' asbestos on the underside of an asbestos cement roof

# ASBESTOS EMERGENCY ACTION

Action to be taken should asbestos or other suspect or unknown material be encountered or disturbed.



## Record of suspected exposure to airborne asbestos

A copy of this Form shall be given to the affected employee(s) on completion. The original shall be retained for a period of not less than 40 years.

Person details (please print)

Name ..... Date of Birth .....  
 Home address ..... Job title .....  
 ..... time in this post: .....  
 ..... time with company: .....

**Statement**

During the course of your authorised work I on ..... (date) you were/may have been exposed to airborne asbestos fibres. The details being as follows:

Name and address of work establishment:      Location of exposure  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

The relevant incident report (ref .....) investigation report (ref .....) and copies of all relevant, contemporaneous and available analytical air sampling and material analysis reports (ref .....) are attached. In addition, the following details are agreed:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Duration of exposure:                       |  |
| Asbestos content type (e.g. chrysotile):    |  |
| Material type (e.g. cement sheet):          |  |
| Activity in area (e.g. painting, drilling): |  |

I also hereby give my consent for this record to be forwarded to company's Occupational Health Service provider. Such records will be maintained for not less than 40 years.

(please print) Employee Name .....

Signature: ..... date: .....

In witness:

(please print) Authorised Supervisor .....

Signature: ..... date: .....