

ARE ASBESTOS INSPECTIONS REQUIRED BY HEALTH & SAFETY REGULATIONS?

Yes. The US Department of Labor, Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) requires the identification and labeling of asbestos in the work place. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and many state regulations also require asbestos inspections prior to any renovation or demolition activity.



Inspections must be performed by accredited/licensed inspectors and risk assessors and laboratory analysis must be performed by NVLAP-accredited laboratories.

Asbestos can be found in insulations, ceiling and floor tiles, adhesives, gypsum and plaster board, siding and roofing, surfacing material, and many, many more common building products.

DOES ALL ASBESTOS HAVE TO BE REMOVED?

No. If the material is kept in good condition it can remain in place. Special precautions are required though. In addition, state and federal regulations do require that asbestos be removed if it will be disturbed or impacted by renovation or demolition activity. In this case, accredited or licensed professionals should prepare abatement specifications to be used to obtain bids from qualified, licensed remediation contractors.

ARE ASBESTOS PRODUCTS STILL SOLD?

Yes. Some products such as roofing tars, patching compounds, and various gasket materials can still be purchased in stores today. Use care to read the product contents.

RPF's trained and experienced EH&S professionals including Certified Industrial Hygienists (CIH), Certified Safety Professionals are available to assist you in the recognition, evaluation and control of asbestos and other hazardous building materials. A summary of those services include:

- ❖ Facility Inspections and Assessments
- ❖ Air, Dust, Water, and Bulk Material Testing
- ❖ Accredited laboratory analysis and reporting
- ❖ Management Planning and O&M Programs
- ❖ OSHA and EPA Compliance Audits
- ❖ Maintenance and Management Training
- ❖ Technical specifications, bid assistance, project management and oversight for remediation of mold, asbestos, lead based paint and other hazardous materials
- ❖ Pre- and Post-abatement air quality testing and visual clearance inspections

If you do decide to test, use only qualified trained professionals. Consult recognized professional associations such as the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) and local and State health officials for further information. Or call RPF at 888-SAFE AIR.



RPF Environmental, Inc.

Portland, ME
1-888-SAFE AIR
www.airpf.com



ASBESTOS BUILDING MATERIAL

A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF COMMON QUESTIONS



“Asbestos has been used in over 3,000 products”

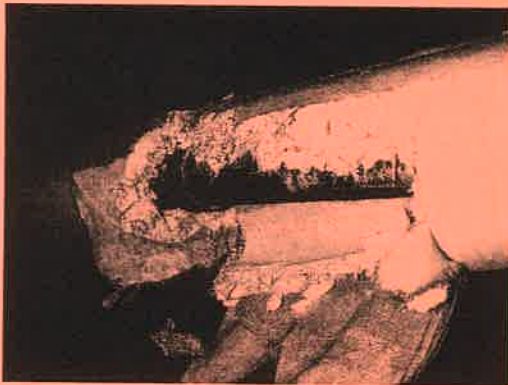
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

www.airpf.com
RPF ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.

WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is the name for a group of naturally occurring, fibrous minerals that separate into strong, very fine fibers. There are several different kinds of asbestos and they all share similar properties. On the whole, the fibers are heat resistant, chemical resistant, and flexible. As such, they were ideal for many uses in industry, manufacturing, and building construction.

However, the adverse health effects associated with asbestos exposure have been extensively studied for many years. Results of these studies and epidemiological investigations have demonstrated that inhalation of asbestos fibers may lead to increased risk of developing one or more diseases.



Damaged friable asbestos pipe insulation.

WHY IS ASBESTOS DANGEROUS?

Typically, asbestos and asbestos-containing materials can break down into much smaller fibers. The smaller fibers, sometimes up to 1,000 times thinner than a human hair, cannot be seen without a microscope. When inhaled, these fibers are not filtered out by the human body's

natural defenses in the mouth, nose, and cilia (hairline cells that sweep debris out of the respiratory tract). Once past these natural defense mechanisms, asbestos fibers travel deep into the lungs and cause serious diseases.



"When you can't breathe, nothing else matters"
American Lung Association

WHAT ARE THE ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASES?

The three diseases most often related to asbestos exposure are asbestosis, mesothelioma, and lung cancer. Asbestosis is a fibrous scarring of the lung caused by scar tissue formations in the lung in response to the asbestos fibers. Mesothelioma is a rare cancer of the lining of the lungs or the lining of the abdomen. Exposure to all types of asbestos increases the risk of developing lung cancer and asbestosis. Other diseases found more often among persons exposed to asbestos include cancer of the esophagus, stomach, colon, and pancreas; pleural plaques; pleural thickening; and pleural effusion.

Exposure to airborne asbestos rarely causes immediate health problems. The diseases related to asbestos may develop over a period of 10 to 30 years. Studies have shown that there is a dose-response relationship between exposure to asbestos and disease-or the more asbestos inhaled over an extended period, the greater the risk of developing an asbestos-related disease.



DO ALL PEOPLE EXPOSED TO ASBESTOS DEVELOP ASBESTOS RELATED DISEASE?

Most people exposed to minor amounts of asbestos do not develop any related health problems. However, smokers exposed to asbestos have a much greater risk of developing lung cancer. Typically, high exposures over long periods of time increase the risk for most asbestos related diseases.

"No safe exposure threshold for asbestos has been established..."

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

DOES ALL ASBESTOS MATERIAL PRESENT AN IMMEDIATE RISK?

No. An immediate health risk exists only when the material is broken, crumbled, cut, or otherwise disturbed in a fashion that results in fiber release. The soft, easily crumbled (or friable) asbestos-containing materials have the greatest potential for fiber release, thus presenting the greatest health risk.

HOW DO I FIND OUT IF ASBESTOS IS PRESENT AND PRESENTS A RISK?

The best way to determine if you have asbestos present is to have accredited/licensed industrial hygiene/inspection professional collect and analyze samples of the materials. Sampling and testing of the materials should be completed in strict accordance with applicable safety regulations.

