

(November 2007)

Information sheet Removal of asbestos from buildings prior to demolition

Asbestos was used extensively as a building material in England and Wales from the 1950's through to the mid 1980's. Although some of this material has been removed over the years, there are many thousands of tonnes of asbestos still present in buildings. It is estimated that over half a million non-domestic premises currently have some form of asbestos in them. It is estimated that asbestos related diseases still account for 4000 deaths per annum.

You are most likely to come across asbestos in the following materials:

- Sprayed asbestos and asbestos loose packing – generally used as fire breaks in ceiling voids.
- Moulded or preformed lagging – generally used in thermal insulation of pipes and boilers.
- Sprayed asbestos – generally used as fire protection in ducts.
- Fire breaks, panels, partitions, soffit boards, ceiling panels and around structural steelwork.
- Insulating boards used for fire protection, thermal insulation, partitioning and ducts.
- Some ceiling tiles.
- Millboard, paper and paper products used for insulation of electrical equipment. Asbestos paper has also been used as a fireproof facing on wood fibreboard.
- Asbestos cement products which can be full or semi-compressed into flat or corrugated sheets. Corrugated sheets are largely used as roofing and wall cladding. Other asbestos cement products include gutters, rainwater pipes and water tanks.
- Certain textured coatings.
- Bitumen roofing material.
- Vinyl or thermoplastic floor tiles.

Asbestos has been used in all sorts of places, so you cannot presume buildings are free from it.

Prior to demolition you have a legal obligation to ensure that all the buildings involved are free from asbestos containing materials. Please refer to The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.

- 1 **You must carry out an asbestos survey** unless you already have the documentation listed in 3 below. The survey must be a Type 3 full access sampling and identification survey. You should confirm that the individual or organisation chosen has adequate, relevant training, experience and a quality management system. They should be competent and able to carry out the survey in accordance with MDHS 100, "Surveying, sampling and assessment of asbestos containing materials". To assess the organisation or individual you can check that they are accredited by the [United Kingdom Accreditation Service \(UKAS\)](#), 21-47 High Street, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 4UN, telephone 020 8917 8400.

The client must ensure that the surveyor is given full access to all areas. In our experience many reports of Type 3 surveys contain such clauses that excuse the company from carrying out full access sampling. For example, they can exclude access above 2 metres and into false ceilings, areas where it is dark or areas where

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there might be live power and locked rooms. These excuses are not acceptable. The client should be aware of such potential limitations and ensure that full access sampling is undertaken.

- 2 Following the survey **all asbestos containing materials identified should be removed** in accordance with The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.
 - a Asbestos cement sheet and textured coating (artex) materials can be removed by non-licensed contractors, but should be done in accordance with [Asbestos Essentials – Information sheets](#).
 - b Most other asbestos materials must be removed by a contractor licensed by the Health and Safety Executive in accordance with the Asbestos – The Licensed Contractors Guide (HSG 247). The licensed contractor will be required to provide notification to the HSE or the local enforcing authority in writing at least 14 days before commencing work. There is a list of licensed contractors available on the HSE website - [HSE Web Communities – Asbestos Licensing Information – Asbestos Licence Holders](#).
- 3 When work with asbestos is completed the work area should be thoroughly cleaned before being handed over for re-occupation. Where the work is licensable, a four stage clearance procedure should be carried out and a certificate of re-occupation issued by a UKAS accredited organisation or individual as per paragraph 1.

Further information regarding your duties concerning asbestos can be found at:

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

Telephone HSE Books 01787 881 165 for copies of the above guidance.